



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

WIDENER



HN LJ7Q R

No. 243

F. RAY THOMPSON.

rice, Date,

Began, in Europe in 144

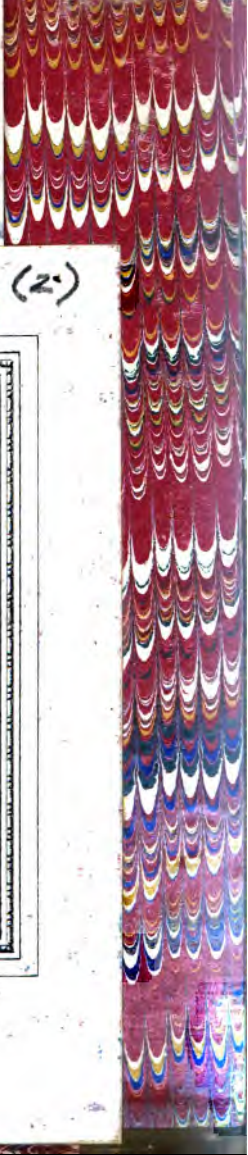
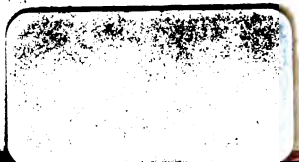
~~47587.28~~

XP 253 (2)

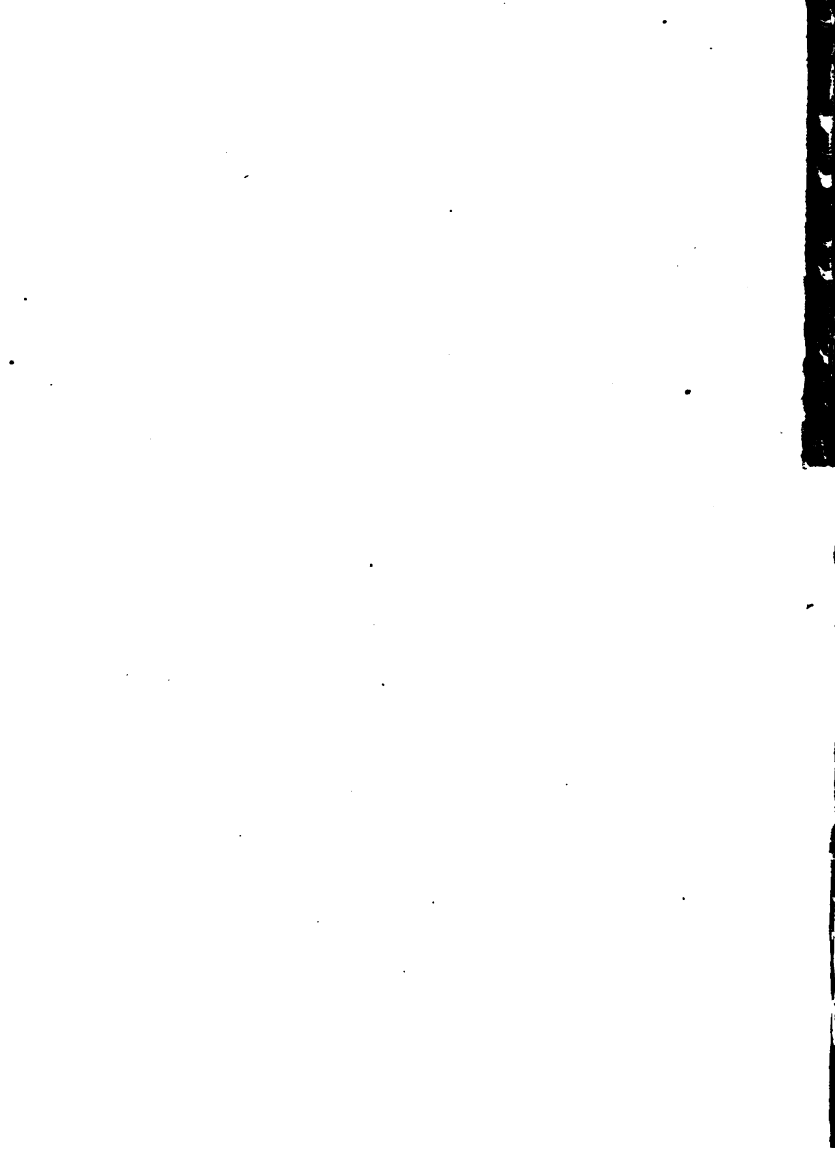


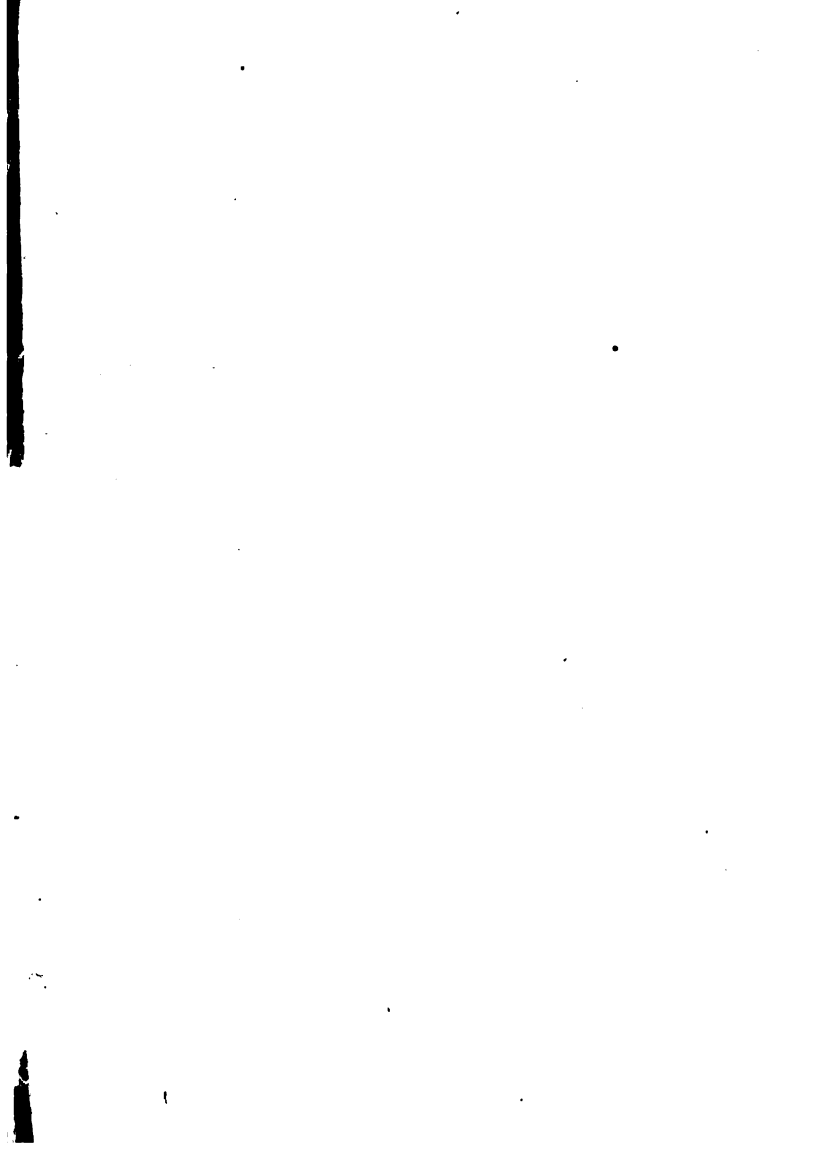
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
BEQUEST OF
EDWARD RAY THOMPSON
TROY NEW YORK

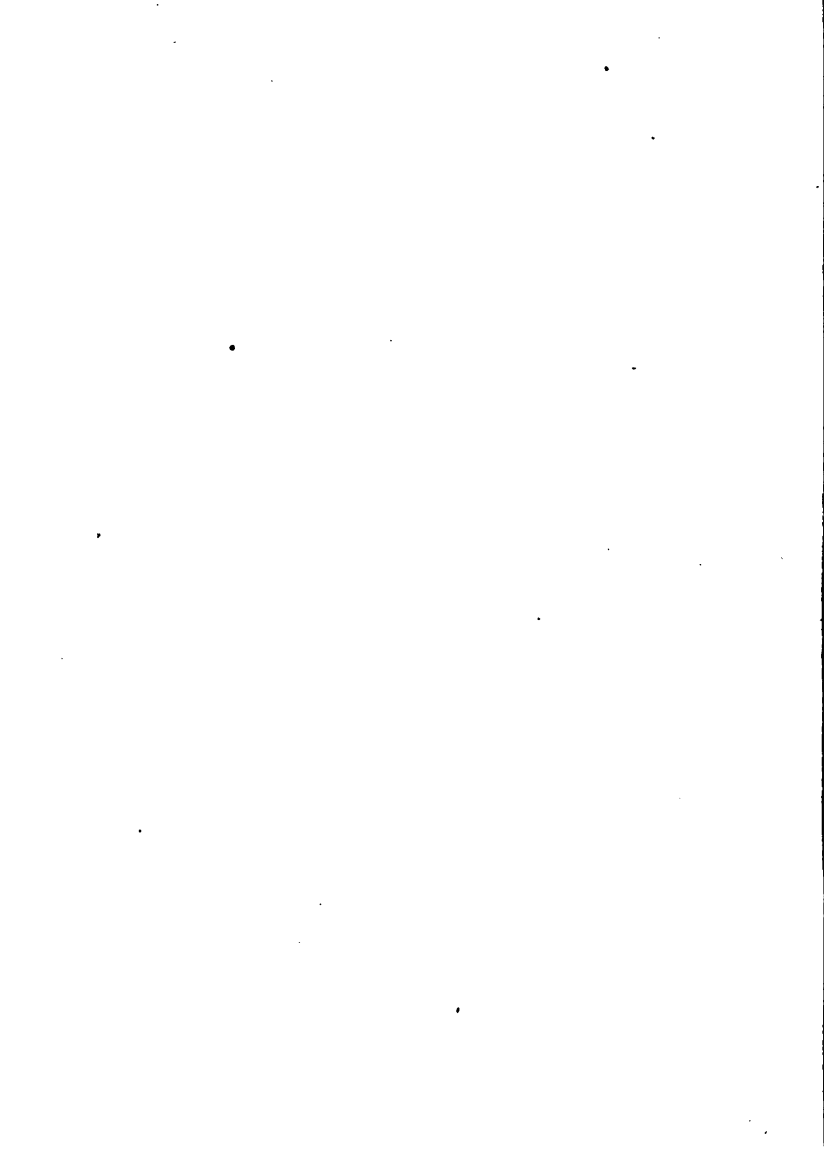
RECEIVED DECEMBER 14-
M D CCC XCIX











COLLECTION
OF
GERMAN AUTHORS.

VOL. 26.

WILHELM MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP

By GOETHE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



WILHELM MEISTER'S

APPRENTICESHIP,

BY

GOETHE.

FROM THE GERMAN

BY

ELEANOR GROVE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LEIPZIG 1873

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ.

LONDON: SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, LOW & SEARLE.
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

PARIS: C. REINWALD & C^{ie}, 15, RUE DES SAINTS PÈRES.

~~47587.28~~

*

Harvard College Library,
Bequest of Edward Ray Thompson,
of Troy, N. Y.
December 14, 1899.

XP 253 (2)

WILHELM MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

IN addition to his two former and still scarcely healed wounds, Wilhelm had now a fresh and by no means trifling one. Aurelia would not allow a surgeon to be called in; she dressed his hand herself, accompanying the operation with all kinds of strange speeches, ceremonies, and proverbs, and placing him by this means in a very painful position. And this was not Wilhelm's case alone; every one who came in contact with Aurelia suffered from her restlessness and eccentricity; but no one more than little Felix. The child's quick, lively temperament made him extremely impatient under restraint of this kind, and the more Aurelia corrected and reproved the worse he behaved.

He was fond of indulging in certain habits which are usually looked upon as ill-bred, and in these she was not the least disposed to humour him. For instance he preferred the bottle to the glass as a drinking-vessel, and it was very evident that his food relished better out of the dish than off his own plate. These improprieties were never overlooked, and if he left the door open or slammed it, and when told to do anything either refused to move

from the spot or ran away rudely, he was forced to hear a long lecture. He showed no trace of amendment however, but on the contrary seemed to care less and less for Aurelia every day; when he called her mother there was no tenderness in his tone, though he was passionately attached to his old nurse, but this was not to be wondered at as the latter gave him his own way in everything.

For some time past, however, she had been ill too, and so seriously that removal to a quiet lodging had been found necessary. Thus little Felix would have been quite alone if Mignon had not come forward as his guardian angel. The two children amused themselves in the prettiest way together; she taught him little songs, and as his memory was very good he often repeated them, to the astonishment of his hearers. Then too she tried to explain to him the maps with which her own mind was so constantly occupied, but here her method was not the best. The great interest of the different countries for her lay in the warmth or cold of their climates. She could give a very good account of the poles, with their frightful icebergs and of the gradual increase of warmth as the traveller leaves them behind him. When any one started on a journey her only question was: were they going north or south? She would then try to find the route on her little maps. But when Wilhelm spoke of travelling all her attention was aroused and she seemed distressed if the conversation passed to any other topic. Though every attempt to persuade her to undertake the smallest part or even to enter the theatre during a performance was entirely useless, she took great delight and was very diligent in learning odes and songs by heart, and at times, to the astonishment of every one, would suddenly recite one of these, as if im-

provising, generally choosing some grave and impressive piece.

Serlo, always on the watch for every germ of talent, encouraged her in this, but the gift that found most favour in his eyes was her pretty, varied and sometimes even cheerful singing; the same talent by which the harper had won his favour.

Without possessing musical genius himself or playing on any instrument, Serlo appreciated the high value of music fully, and tried as often as possible to procure himself the pleasure of hearing it—a pleasure with which no other can compare. Once every week he gave a concert; a curious little private orchestra having formed itself, composed of Mignon, the harper and Laertes, who was a very fair performer on the violin.

Serlo often said: People are so inclined to occupy themselves with what is commonest, mind and senses so easily become blunted to impressions of what is good and beautiful, that we ought in every way to try and hold fast the capability of feeling the best and highest things. No one can afford entirely to dispense with these enjoyments, and the fact that so many people take delight in what is worthless and absurd, provided only it be a novelty, is accounted for by the few opportunities they have of enjoying anything really good. We ought, he would say, to hear at least one little song every day, read a good poem, see a first-rate painting, and, if possible, speak a few sensible words.

These being Serlo's views, and in some measure natural to him, there could be no lack of agreeable entertainment for the circle in which he moved. One day however in the midst of this pleasant life a letter was brought to Wilhelm with a black seal. The seal was Werner's; bad news was to be feared and Wilhelm was

shocked on opening it to read a brief announcement of his father's death. He had been carried off by a short and sudden illness leaving his domestic affairs in the best order.

Wilhelm felt this unexpected news very deeply. It grieved him to think with what neglectful indifference we often treat our friends and relations so long as they share this earthly existence with us, and only repent of our shortcomings when that pleasant state of things has, at least for the present, ceased to exist. The feeling that very little love had sweetened his father's life, and the conviction that it had not been a happy one, were the only considerations that could comfort him for the death of so good and honourable a man in the prime of life.

Wilhelm's thoughts however soon turned to his own circumstances. There is no more dangerous position for a man than that in which he is placed, when by means of outward circumstances some great change is effected in his position without any corresponding preparation in his modes of feeling and thinking. It is an epoch which does not deserve the name, and the less conscious a man is of his unfitness for this new position, the greater becomes the contradiction.

Wilhelm found himself free at a moment when his mind was not made up. His sentiments were noble, his ends and aims pure, and his purposes apparently commendable. All this he believed he might with some degree of confidence acknowledge; but he had had many opportunities of observing that he lacked experience, and the exaggerated value which this deficiency led him to place on the experience of others, and the results they so confidently deduced therefrom, led him still further

astray. He fancied this defect could best and most quickly be remedied by careful retention and collection of everything worthy of note that he had read or heard. With this view he noted down the opinions—either his own or others'—which had interested him and sometimes indeed whole conversations, retaining however unfortunately by this means what was false as well as what was true, dwelling far too long on one idea—nay, one might say even on a single sentence—and, by following strange lights as if they were guiding-stars, forsaking ever more and more his own natural way of thinking and acting. Aurelia's bitterness and his friend Laertes' cold contempt for mankind too often led his judgment astray, but his most dangerous acquaintance had been Jarno. He was a man whose clear intellect could always pass a strict just sentence on present things, but who erred in pronouncing these decisions on special cases as if they could be applied universally; whereas in truth the decisions of the intellect can be really valid in one case only and that the most clearly determined one, becoming inaccurate if applied to any other, even though standing in close connexion with it.

Thus, while striving to come to a decision, Wilhelm was wandering farther and farther from sound consistency, and this very confusion in his ideas made it easier for his ruling passions to avail themselves of existing material and plunge him into still deeper confusion as to his future course.

Serlo took advantage of the mournful news; indeed some change in his arrangements was becoming more and more necessary every day. Either the former contracts would have to be renewed, for which he had no great fancy, as some members of his company, imagining themselves indispensable, were growing more and more

intolerable daily; or, which was much more to his taste, the entire company would have to be remodelled.

Without himself pressing the matter on Wilhelm he incited Aurelia and Philine to do so, and as the rest of the actors belonging to the old company left him no peace either in their eagerness to obtain an engagement, he felt perplexed and undecided. Who would have imagined that a letter written by Werner with the most opposite intentions should at last have forced him to a decision? We will omit the introductory sentences and give the rest of this letter with but few alterations.

CHAPTER II.

“So it always has been, and so I suppose it is only fair that it should be—every one will pursue his own affairs energetically on every occasion. In little more than one quarter of an hour after the good old man’s death his wishes were forgotten or neglected even in his own house. Friends, relations, acquaintances thronged thither, and more especially that class of people who have anything to gain on such occasions. Some brought and others carried away; there was paying, writing and reckoning of accounts. Some fetched wine and cake, others ate and drank, and busiest of all were the women looking out mourning.

“Such being the case, I am sure, my dear fellow, you will not blame me for having thought of my own interest too a little, done as much as I possibly could to help your sister, and, as soon as was at all decorous under the circumstances, explained to her that it now rested with ourselves to hasten the marriage which had

so long been postponed by the ceremonious scruples of our parents.

"You must not fancy however that the idea of taking possession of that great lonely house ever came into our heads; we are wiser and more modest than to do that. You shall hear our plan. Directly we are married your sister is coming to our house and your mother too.

"You will say: 'How is that possible? You have scarcely room for yourselves in that nest!' There lies the art, my friend. Everything is possible with clever management, and you have no idea how much room a man has when he is satisfied with a little. A good opportunity for selling the large house has just offered; this we mean to embrace, and the money it brings in shall pay interest a hundredfold.

"I hope you will agree to this, and I hope too that you have not inherited a taste for either your father's or grandfather's unprofitable hobbies. The latter staked his whole happiness on a number of insignificant-looking works of art which no one—I think I may really say no one—*could* enjoy with him, and the former lived in the midst of expensive style which he *allowed* no one to enjoy with him. We mean to act differently and I hope with your approval.

"It is true that the only place I keep for myself in our whole house is the seat at my desk, and I confess that I can't at present see where the future cradle is to stand; but the less room there is inside the house the more there is out of doors—coffee-houses and clubs for the husband, promenades and drives for the wife, and pleasant trips into the country for both; and the greatest advantage of all is, that there will be no room at our round table for my father's friends, who laugh at him all the more, the greater the pains he takes to treat them hospitably.

"Only let us have no useless things in the house! no unnecessary furniture, no carriage nor horses. Money—nothing but money—and then every day some reasonable pleasure. No wardrobe full of dress; the best and newest always on; the husband can wear his coat till it is shabby and the wife sell her dress directly it is out of fashion. There's nothing I hate more than a mass of rubbishing old property. If any one would give me the most precious jewel on condition that I was to wear it daily on my finger I would not accept it. What pleasure can there possibly be in so much barren capital? Now you know my jovial creed: Do your business, make money, enjoy yourself with your family, and don't care a straw for the rest of the world unless you can make use of them.

"But I shall have you saying: 'And what thought of me is there in this pretty plan? Where am I to live, if you sell my father's house and have not a cranny to spare in your own?'

"Of course that's the principal point, old fellow, and there too I can be of service to you, but not till I have expressed my praise and admiration of the way in which you have spent your time.

"Tell me, however did you manage to get such a thorough knowledge of so many useful and interesting subjects in the space of so few weeks? I always thought you clever, but I confess that I did not give you credit for so much observation and industry. Your journal satisfies us that the journey has been of the greatest use to you; the description of the iron and copper works is capital and shows great discernment. I went once to see them too, but my account is a bungling affair by the side of yours. Your letter on the linen manufacture is instructive throughout, and the remarks on competition

quite to the point. In one or two places there are some errors in addition, very excusable ones however.

"But your well-grounded notions about farming and the improvement of estates pleased my father and myself more and better than anything else. We have some hope of being able to buy a large estate in a very fertile part of the country, now lying under sequestration. The sum realised by the sale of the family house will pay part of the purchase money, part we shall borrow, and part need not be paid at once. We reckon on your going there and superintending the improvements, by which means, to say the least, in a few years the land will have risen one-third in value. It can then be sold, a larger estate bought improved and sold in the same way; and for this you are the very man. Meanwhile our pens at home will not be idle, and we shall soon have placed ourselves in a most enviable position.

"Now farewell! Enjoy your journey, and go wherever you expect to find the most pleasure and profit. We shall be in no need of you for the next six months, so you can see the world to your heart's content. For a sensible man, travelling is the best education. Farewell, again. I am very glad that as we are such near connexions we shall soon be united in our work."

Though this letter was so well written and contained so many practical truths, it displeased Wilhelm for more than one reason. Werner's praise of his feigned statistical, technological, and agricultural knowledge was a quiet reproach; the ideal of a citizen's life as described by his brother-in-law had no charms for him; on the contrary, a spirit of contradiction urged him to take the opposite side. He convinced himself that the culture he so longed to possess could only be perfectly attained on the stage, and Werner's eager, though unconscious,

opposition seemed only to strengthen his resolution. He collected and condensed all his arguments and felt them more confirmed in his own opinions, as his desire to place them before the prudent Werner grew stronger. This state of mind gave rise to the answer which we now insert.

CHAPTER III.

"YOUR letter is so well written and the reasoning and thought in it are so clever that nothing remains to be added on the subject. But you will pardon me when I say that a man may think, assert, and do the very opposite and yet be in the right. Your mode of existence and line of thought aim at the unlimited possession of property and an easy, merry style of enjoyment, and I need not tell you that this kind of thing has no charm for me.

"But before writing further I have to confess with sorrow that my journal, written in an emergency to please my father, was concocted from different books, and that, though I have a certain acquaintance with the matters contained in it and with many others of a like nature, I do not at all understand nor wish to occupy myself with them. What good would it do me to be able to turn out first-rate iron if my own mind were full of dross? or to put an estate in order when I cannot bring my own thoughts and feelings into harmony?

"To put the matter briefly: since I was a child it has always been my wish, though a vague and indefinite one, to form and cultivate my own character and powers as they were originally planned. My ideas on this matter have not changed, but the means of attaining my end lie somewhat more clearly before me. I have seen more

of the world and made a better use of it than you fancy, and for this reason I ask you to pay some attention to what I say even if it should not be quite to your mind.

“If I were a nobleman our dispute would soon be settled, but as a simple citizen I must take some other way, and I hope you will not misunderstand me. I do not know how it may be in other countries, but in Germany a liberal, and if I may use the word a personal, education is impossible for any but the upper class. In the middle class a man may earn money and, if positively necessary, may perhaps be able to cultivate his mind, but his individual personality is lost, let him take up what position he may. Mixing, as he does, in the highest society, it becomes the duty of a nobleman to acquire the dignified manners and deportment of that class; as no obstructions are placed in his way and as he is welcome everywhere this deportment becomes free and voluntary, and since, whether at court or in the army, his personal appearance and manners play an important part and are of great importance to him, he has reason to lay, and to show that he lays, much value on them. A certain stately grace in common life, a kind of careless elegance in grave and important matters, sit well upon him, because they show that his mind retains its equilibrium everywhere and at all times. He is a public personage, and the more cultivated his movements, the more sonorous his voice, the calmer and more collected his demeanour, so much the more perfect is he, as such. If in his behaviour he is always the same to high and low, friends and relations, not a word can be said against him, no one can wish him other than he is. He may be cold—it will be looked upon as prudence: his dissimulation will be called wisdom. If he can control himself externally at every moment of his life, no one has a

right to demand more of him and, whatever else he may possess, abilities, talents, or wealth appear only as accessories.

"Now imagine a man out of the middle class even pretending to any of these advantages; he could not fail to be disappointed, and would feel his disappointment all the more bitterly in proportion as nature had endowed him with capabilities for, and impulses towards, such a life.

"The nobleman knows of no bounds in ordinary life; men may make a king out of him, or a figure that at least looks very like one, and he can always take his stand among his equals with a quiet consciousness of his own dignity; he may press forward everywhere, while to a simple citizen nothing is so becoming as a clear silent feeling of the boundary-line which has been drawn around him. He has not to ask himself what he *is*, but what he *has*: what experience, knowledge, abilities, wealth he possesses. The nobleman, by the mere presentation of himself, gives all that can be expected of him; the citizen gives and is intended to give nothing by such means. The former may and ought to *seem* something; the latter only to *be*; whatever he tries to seem becomes absurd and is in bad taste. The former is meant to act and influence, the latter to accomplish and produce; he must cultivate single talents in order to be useful, and it is taken for granted that there cannot and ought not to be any harmony between the different parts of his nature because, in order to become useful in one way, he must neglect everything else.

"This distinction between the classes is not to be attributed only to the presumption of the nobility and the yielding docility of the citizen; it arises from the very constitution of society. Whether it will ever be altered,

and how, is of very little importance to me, I have quite enough to do, in the present condition of things, to think of myself and how best I can manage to save and obtain what is for me an indispensable necessity.

"I happen to have an unconquerable wish for just that harmonious cultivation of my nature which the circumstances of my birth have denied me. Since leaving you I have gained a good deal by gymnastic exercises, have got rid of much of my old shyness, and can make a tolerable figure. I have been cultivating my voice, delivery, and style of speaking, and can venture to say without vanity that I do not displease in society. Now I will not deny that my desire to be a public personage and to please and influence a larger circle grows and becomes more irrepressible from day to day. Add to this my love of poetry and of everything connected with it, and the necessity of cultivating my mind and taste so that by degrees I may distinguish more and more clearly what is really good and beautiful in this my favourite pursuit which has now become indispensable to me. I am sure you will see that all this is only to be found on the stage, and that in this element only I can move and cultivate myself as I should wish to do. The educated man can produce as brilliant a personal effect on the stage as in the upper classes; body and mind must keep pace with each other in all his efforts, and there I shall be able to seem and be as well as in any other place. If I should want additional occupation there is no lack of tiresome mechanical employment, and plenty of daily trials for one's patience.

"Don't argue the matter with me; before you have had time to answer this letter the step will have been taken. On account of prevailing prejudices I shall take a feigned name; indeed I should be ashamed to appear

under the name of Meister. Farewell! Our property is in too good hands for me to trouble my head about it. I will ask you from time to time for what I want; it will not be much, for I hope to earn something by my profession."

Wilhelm kept his word. The letter was scarcely gone, before, to the great surprise of Serlo and the rest, he declared his intention of devoting himself to the stage and his readiness to enter into a contract on reasonable terms. These were soon agreed upon, as Serlo had already explained his intentions in a manner calculated to satisfy not only Wilhelm but all the others. The whole of that unfortunate company who have furnished us so long with entertainment were engaged at once, but not one of them, except perhaps Laertes, showed Wilhelm the slightest gratitude. Their demands had been made incredulously and the fulfilment was accepted without thanks. Most of them preferred ascribing their present engagement to Philine's influence, and expressed their thanks to her. Meanwhile the agreements were prepared and signed and, by some inexplicable association of ideas, while Wilhelm was appending his feigned name, there appeared before him the spot in the wood where he had lain in Philine's lap. The charming Amazon on her grey horse came out of the thicket, rode up to him and dismounted. She went to and fro in her kind endeavours to help; at last she stood still before him. Her outer garment fell from her shoulders, a shining glory began to stream from her face and figure, and she vanished. He wrote his name mechanically without knowing what he did, and not till the signature was finished did he discover that Mignon was standing at his side gently trying to draw his hand back.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE of the conditions stipulated by Wilhelm before consenting to go on the stage, was not conceded by Serlo without some restrictions. Wilhelm had required that Hamlet should be given entire and un mutilated, and Serlo had only agreed to this strange request in so far as the thing was *possible*. They had often contested this point already; for on the question as to what was possible or impossible, and what might be left out without mutilating the piece, their opinions differed widely.

Wilhelm was still at that happy period of life when a man cannot understand how there can possibly be a defect in the woman he loves or the author he reveres. His own idea of them is so entire, so free from incongruity of any kind, that he imagines the same perfect harmony in them. Serlo, on the other hand, was fond, perhaps too fond, of making exceptions. His keen understanding was seldom willing to recognise a work of art as anything other than a more or less imperfect whole. He thought that as plays usually were, there was no great reason to be cautious in treating them, and that so Shakespeare of course, and especially Hamlet, would have to be cut down with the rest.

But Wilhelm turned a deaf ear to Serlo's remarks about winnowing the chaff from the wheat. "It is not a mixture of chaff and wheat," he would exclaim; "it is a trunk with boughs, twigs, leaves, blossoms and fruit. Does not each portion spring from the rest, and belong to it?" Serlo would answer: "We are not accustomed to have the whole tree brought to table; an artist ought to offer his guests apples of gold in vessels of silver."

And so they would go on, exhausting every possible comparison and yet seeming to differ more widely than ever.

Our friend was almost in despair, when one day, after a long dispute, Serlo recommended him the simplest method; namely, to resolve at once on taking his pen and striking out everything in the tragedy that could not possibly be acted or adapted and to press two or more characters into one, or if he were not yet up to this kind of proceeding and had not the heart for it, to turn the matter over to him: he would soon finish it.

"But that is contrary to our agreement," cried Wilhelm. "With your good taste how can you act and speak with so much levity?"

"My friend," said Serlo, "you will do the same in time. I know only too well how detestable this style of thing is, and probably there is no other stage in the world where it occurs; but where can you find another theatre so neglected as the German? Authors force us to this nauseous method and the public allows it. How many pieces have we, I should like to know, that do not exceed the measure of our power as to numbers, scenery, and stage machinery, time, dialogue, and the physical strength of our actors? and yet we are expected to go on acting and always give something new. Now as the mutilated plays draw just as large an audience as the unamutilated, why should not we profit by this advantage? It is given us by the public themselves. Few Germans, and possibly few men of any modern nation whatever, possess feeling for an æsthetic whole. Their blame and praise are bestowed on parts only—they only go into ecstasies over particular passages, and for this we actors ought to be especially thankful, for after all the theatre is only a thing of pieces and shreds patched together."

"Is now," said Wilhelm, "but need it remain so? Must everything always remain as it is? Don't try to convince me that you are right, for in that case no power on earth could induce me to keep a contract which I had agreed to under the grossest error."

Serlo gave the matter a joking turn and begged Wilhelm to think over the many conversations they had had on the subject and try himself to discover some method of handling the piece successfully.

After some days passed in solitude Wilhelm reappeared with a cheerful countenance. "I am very much mistaken," he said, "if I have not found out a plan that will remove all our difficulties; indeed I am convinced that Shakespeare himself would have pursued the same course if his genius had not been so entirely occupied with the principal points, and possibly led astray by the romances from which he drew his plot."

"Well, let us hear," said Serlo, seating himself gravely on the sofa. "I will give you a calm hearing, but I shall criticise all the more severely."

"I am not afraid," answered Wilhelm, "if you will only listen. After the most careful examination and mature deliberation I distinguish two main points in the composition of this play. First the grand inner relations between the personages and events—the powerful effects arising from the characters and actions of the principal figures in this tragedy. These are separately admirable, and the series in which they follow could not possibly be improved. No kind of treatment could destroy or even disfigure them. These are what every one longs to see, what no one dares to attack; these stamp their image on our minds, and I hear they have nearly all been produced on the German stage. But in my opinion there has been an error in the treatment of the second

noticeable point in this play: namely, the outward circumstances by which the different characters are transferred from place to place and in one way or another connected by chance occurrences. Too little importance has been set on these; they are only cursorily mentioned and sometimes overlooked altogether. They are certainly but threads—thin and loose ones too—but they run through the whole piece and hold together what would and does fall to pieces when, in the belief that by leaving their ends we have done more than enough, we cut the rest away.

“Among these outward circumstances I reckon the disturbances in Norway, the war with young Fortinbras, the embassy to the old uncle, the settlement of the dispute, Fortinbras’s march to and return from Poland; also Horatio’s return from Wittenberg, Hamlet’s wish to go thither, Laertes’ journey to France, his return, the sending of Hamlet to England, his capture by pirates and the death of the two courtiers by the letter, of which, like Uriah, they were the bearers: these are all circumstances and events which would help to fill a novel, but have an especially damaging effect on the unity of a piece where the hero has no plan, and are most incorrect.”

“There, now you are speaking as I like to hear you,” cried Serlo.

“Don’t interrupt me,” answered Wilhelm. “You may not be so disposed to praise me as I go on. These errors are to the piece what temporary supports are to a building; they must not be removed until a firm wall has been built up beneath them. My proposition therefore is, that the above-mentioned grand relations be not only left untouched, but treated—both as a whole and in detail—with the greatest circumspection and tenderness; while on the other hand I would entirely do away with

these external, detached, scattered and distracting motives and substitute one only in their stead."

"And that would be?" asked Serlo, raising himself from his recumbent posture.

"It is in the piece already," answered Wilhelm; "only I shall make the right use of it. It is the disturbances in Norway. Here is my plan, ready for your criticism. After the death of Hamlet's father, the recently subdued Norwegians become restless. The Danish viceroy sends his son Horatio, one of Hamlet's old school friends, but who has surpassed all the rest in courage and prudence, to hasten the equipment of the fleet, which is making but tardy progress under the present drunken and licentious king. Horatio had known the old king, had borne a part in his last battles and stood high in his favour; and this will not injure the first scene with the ghost. The new king gives Horatio audience and sends Laertes to Norway with a message that the fleet will soon arrive; Horatio meanwhile receiving orders to hasten its equipment. Hamlet's mother, on the other hand, refuses her consent to his embarking with Horatio as he wishes."

"Thank God!" cried Serlo; "then we are rid of the Wittenberg college which has always been such a grievous stumbling-block to me. Your idea is very good; for the two distant objects, Norway and the fleet, are all that the spectator has to *imagine*; the rest he can *see*, it takes place before his eyes and his imagination is not hunted through the world from place to place."

"You can easily see now," said Wilhelm, "how I mean to keep the rest together. On Hamlet's revealing his stepfather's crime to Horatio, the latter advises his coming to Norway with him, gaining over the army and returning in arms. As Hamlet is becoming dangerous to the king and queen they can devise no better method

of getting rid of him than to send him after the fleet with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as spies, and Laertes in the meanwhile returning, enraged to such a point that he is quite ready to commit murder, is sent after Hamlet. The fleet is detained by contrary winds and Hamlet comes back. Some suitable reason for his church-yard wandering will turn up, I have no doubt; his encounter with Laertes in Ophelia's grave is a grand moment which we cannot afford to give up. After this the king may possibly think it advisable to get rid of Hamlet at once; the festival at departure and the seeming reconciliation between himself and Laertes are solemnly celebrated, a tournament is held and Hamlet and Laertes fence. I cannot finish the piece without the four dead bodies; not one must be left alive, and as the nation has to proceed to election once more, Hamlet gives his dying vote for Horatio."

"Now sit down quickly, and work it out," said Serlo. "I thoroughly approve the idea, only don't wait till your fancy has cooled."

CHAPTER V.

WILHELM had long been busy over a translation of Hamlet; in this he had made use of Wieland's clever work, which indeed had been his first introduction to Shakespeare. He had added whatever Wieland had left out, and was thus, at the very moment when he and Serlo had agreed as to the way in which the play should be treated, in possession of a complete version. He now began, according to his plan, to strike out, to insert, to alter and then often to restore to its original form,

for, satisfied as he was with his own idea in theory, its carrying out seemed always to spoil the original.

As soon as the piece was finished he read it aloud to Serlo and the rest of the company. They all appeared very much pleased with his work, and Serlo in particular made some especially favourable remarks.

"You have perceived with great justice," he said, "that though outward circumstances are necessary as an accompaniment to this piece, they ought to be less complicated than those which the great poet has given us. Whatever is supposed to be going on outside the theatre—not seen but only imagined by the spectator—is like a background in front of which the acting figures move. The play gains by the broad but simple distant prospect of Norway and the fleet; if that were entirely removed, the whole thing would sink into a mere family scene, and the grand notion of a royal house ruined by its own crimes, and ill unseemly deeds would not be presented to us in its full dignity. At the same time, if that background is in itself complex, variable, and confused, it mars the effect of the figures acting before it."

referred.
 Wilhelm began to take Shakespeare's part again, showing that he had written for islanders—for Englishmen accustomed to see no other background than ships and sea-voyages, the French coast and pirates—and that what to Germans was distracting and confusing was a thing of every-day life to an Englishman.

Serlo was forced to yield the point; but they both agreed that as the piece was to be given on the German stage, a graver and simpler background would better suit the German mode of thought.

The parts had already been distributed. Serlo had undertaken Polonius; Aurelia, Ophelia; Laertes' part was

denoted beforehand by his name, and a short, stout, lively young fellow, who had lately arrived, received the part of Horatio; their only difficulty was to provide for the king and the ghost, as only the old blusterer was left over for both. As king Serlo proposed the Pedant, but Wilhelm protested against this to the utmost of his power. They could come to no decision.

Wilhelm moreover, had in his version, left both Rosen-crantz and Guildenstern. "Why did not you put those two into one?" said Serlo. "The abbreviation would have been so easy to make."

"Heaven defend me from such abbreviations!" cried Wilhelm; "they do away with both sense and effect. What those two are and do, no one man could possibly represent. In such trifles as these Shakespeare proves his greatness. That cautious method of procedure, that cringing and creeping, ready subservience, coaxing and flattery; that agile dexterity, everything to every man and yet so empty, that righteous knavery, that incapacity—how could it all be represented by one man? There ought to be at least a dozen, if one could only get them; individually they are worth nothing; they must be in society—in fact they are society—and Shakespeare was very moderate and prudent in letting only two such creatures appear. Besides, in my version I want a pair of them to contrast with that one good and excellent Horatio."

"I see what you mean," said Serlo; "and we shall be able to manage it. Elmira" (the name given to the old blusterer's eldest daughter) "shall take one. It can do no harm for them to be good-looking, and I'll dress and train the little dears so that it shall be a treat to look at them."

Philine was delighted beyond measure that the part

of Queen in the smaller play had been assigned to her. "I'll make it seem quite natural," she said, "to marry a second husband in a hurry after having loved the first immensely. I shall hope for tremendous applause, and every man shall long to be my third."

Aurelia looked annoyed; her dislike to Philine was increasing daily.

"It's a great pity," said Serlo, "that we can't bring in a ballet; you should dance a *pas de deux* with your first and second husbands, the elder one should be lulled to sleep by the music, and your little feet and ankles would look charming on the small theatre at the back of the stage."

"You can know very little about my ankles," answered Philine pertly, "and as to my little feet," she went on, putting her hand under the table quickly, pulling off her slippers and placing them side by side before Serlo, "there are their little stilts, and I'll trouble you to find prettier ones."

"I meant what I said," he answered, looking at the graceful little slippers. "Certainly, it would be difficult to find anything prettier."

They were of Paris workmanship, and had been given to Philine by the Countess, whose foot was celebrated for its beauty.

"They are most charming objects," exclaimed Serlo, "my heart leaps up within me when I behold them."

"Look at his ecstasies!" cried Philine.

"There's nothing prettier than such a well-made pair of slippers," he exclaimed, "but their sound is still more charming than their appearance." He took them up and let them fall several times one after another on the table.

"What are you doing?" cried Philine. "Give them back to me directly."

"Ah!" said Serlo, with comic gravity and pretended modesty, "for us poor solitary bachelors there's nothing like the tap! tap! of such little shoes. They may talk of nightingales, murmuring brooks, whispering winds and every kind of music that has ever been sung, played, or whistled on this earth: I stick to this tap! tap!—the most charming subject in a rondo that one's never tired of hearing."

"Philine took her slippers out of his hands, saying: "I've trodden them quite on one side, they're so much too large for me," and then began to rub the soles together. "How they burn!" she said, putting one of them against her cheek, rubbed them again, and held one out to Serlo. He was good-natured enough to touch it, and in the same moment she cried "Tap! tap!" and gave him such a sharp blow with the heel that he screamed and drew his hand back. "I'll teach you to talk nonsense about my slippers," she said laughing.

"And I'll teach you to play children's tricks on old people," answered Serlo, jumping up, seizing her, and stealing a number of kisses, not one of which she allowed him to take without an artful show of determined resistance. During the struggle, her long hair fell down, and wound round them both, the chair fell, and Aurelia, thoroughly annoyed at this disgraceful scene, rose in disgust.

CHAPTER VI.

THOUGH in Wilhelm's new version of Hamlet a good many characters had been left out, those remaining were sufficiently numerous, and the company scarcely large enough for its performance.

"If things are to go on thus," said Serlo, "our prompter will have to come up out of his hole and wander among us as a personage."

"I've often admired him at his own work," said Wilhelm.

"I don't believe a better prompter exists," said Serlo. "You won't find that a single spectator has even heard him, while we on the stage can understand every syllable. It's as if he had made himself a voice for the purpose, and like a good genius whispered intelligibly to us in our need. He knows by instinct how far every actor will be certain of his part and guesses a long way beforehand where his memory will fail him. In one or two instances, when I had hardly been able even to read over my part, he gave me the whole, word by word, so that I played it with success. But he has eccentricities which would make any one else totally useless; he takes, namely, such a deep interest in the plays, that, though I can't say he exactly declaims the pathetic passages, he recites them with a great deal of feeling. He has put me out more than once by this trick."

"And by another of his eccentricities," said Aurelia, "he once left me in the lurch at a most dangerous point."

"How is that possible," asked Wilhelm, "if he is so attentive?"

"Certain passages," answered Aurelia, "touch him so deeply that he begins to shed tears and for some moments loses all self-control; and it is not what are usually looked on as the affecting passages that bring him into this condition, but what (to express myself clearly) may be called the *beautiful* parts of the play, those out of which the unclouded spirit of the poet looks forth, as it were, with clear, open eyes—passages which at the

most give the rest of us pleasure and by thousands of hearers are entirely overlooked."

"But with so much feeling why does not he go on the stage?"

"A hoarse voice and stiff manner prevent his doing that," answered Serlo, "and his melancholy temperament excludes him from society. I have taken the greatest trouble to make him intimate with me, but entirely in vain. He reads beautifully—as I have never heard any one read before; no one understands so thoroughly the delicate boundary line between declamation and impassioned recital."

"The very man! the very man!" cried Wilhelm; "what a fortunate discovery! Now we have found some one to recite the passage of 'The rugged Pyrrhus.'"

"No one who felt less passionately eager on this matter than you do, would be able to make everything serve his ends," said Serlo.

"Certainly," said Wilhelm. "I was in the greatest distress, lest we should have to leave out that passage and so cripple the whole piece."

"I do not see how that could be," said Aurelia.

"I hope to convert you to my opinion very soon," answered Wilhelm. "Shakespeare has a double purpose in introducing these newly-arrived players: the man who recites the death of Priam with so much real feeling makes a deep impression on the prince himself; he sharpens the wavering young man's conscience, and thus the *first* scene becomes a prelude to the *second*, in which the little play produces such a powerful effect on the king. Hamlet feels himself put to shame by the player's deep sympathy in feigned and foreign sorrow. It rouses within him the idea of taking the same means to work on his father's conscience. What a wonderful monologue that

is with which the second act closes! I quite look forward to reciting it.

“O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect.
A broken voice and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba! What is Hecuba to him,
Or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?”

“If we can only get our man on the stage,” said Aurelia.

“We must bring him to the point by degrees,” answered Serlo. “He can read the passage at the rehearsals; we will say we are expecting an actor to take that part and we shall see then how we get on with him.”

Having come to an agreement on this matter, their conversation turned to the ghost. Wilhelm could not resolve on giving the living king to the Pedant that the old blusterer might play the ghost; he thought it would be better to wait a little, as some new actors had announced their coming, and possibly one of them might prove to be the right man.

The reader can therefore imagine Wilhelm's astonishment at finding on his table the same evening a sealed letter written in a remarkable hand and addressed to him in his assumed theatrical name. It ran as follows:

“You are in great perplexity, O strange youth! we know it. You can scarcely find human beings, much less ghosts, for your Hamlet. Your zeal deserves a miracle; we cannot work miracles, but something marvellous shall come to pass. If you have confidence, the ghost shall appear at the right moment. Take courage

and be prepared. There is no need of an answer; we shall be made aware of your decision."

He sped back to Serlo with this letter. Serlo, after reading it again and again, said gravely that it was a serious matter and they must reflect before venturing on such a risk. They talked the matter over; Aurelia said nothing but smiled quietly from time to time, and some days after, when the subject came up again, intimated pretty plainly that she believed her brother was at the bottom of the joke. She begged Wilhelm not to be anxious but wait in patience for the ghost.

Serlo was altogether in the best of spirits; the departing actors were doing their best in order to make their loss duly felt, and the curiosity of the public as to the new company gave a prospect of good receipts.

Neither had Wilhelm's society been without its influence on him. He began to speak more about art; for after all he was a German—one of a nation that likes to render itself an account of its actions. Wilhelm wrote down many of these conversations, but, as our tale must not be too often interrupted, we will take some other opportunity of laying these essays on the drama before those of our readers who may feel an interest in such things.

Serlo was especially merry one evening when speaking of the way in which he meant to give the character of Polonius. "This time," he said, "I promise you a real treat from this worthy gentleman. I'll exhibit most charmingly the due amount of calmness and assurance, emptiness and importance, amiability and insipidity, liberty and watchfulness, sincere knavery and lying truth. I'll give you, both in word and deed, this gray-headed, loyal, persevering, time-serving, half-rogué in the most

polite and courtly fashion, and the somewhat rude rough strokes of our author shall do me good service. I'll talk like a book when I'm primed beforehand, and like a fool when I'm in a good humour. I'll be absurd and insipid in order to disagree with no one, and too artful to notice that they're laughing at me. I have seldom felt so much mischievous pleasure in acting a part before."

"I wish I could say or hope as much of mine," said Aurelia. "I have neither youthfulness nor sensibility enough to be at home in the character of Ophelia. One thing only I know, to my sorrow: the feeling that turned Ophelia mad will not forsake me."

"We won't take the matter so strictly," said Wilhelm. "As to myself, much as I have studied the piece, I see that my wish to take the part of Hamlet has been a great mistake. The more I study the part, the more clearly I see, that in my whole appearance there is not the faintest resemblance to the physiognomy of Shakespeare's Hamlet, and when I think how closely every feature of the part is connected I hardly dare trust to producing even a tolerable impression."

"You begin your career very conscientiously," said Serlo. "An actor must suit himself to his part as well as he can, and the part must give way to the actor. But how has Shakespeare drawn Hamlet? Is he so very unlike you?"

"First of all, Hamlet is a fair man," replied Wilhelm.

"I call that far-fetched," said Aurelia. "What makes you think so?"

"As a Dane and a Northman he must naturally have fair hair and blue eyes."

"Do you think Shakespeare thought of that?"

"I do not find it said in so many words, but on

looking at the connexion I think there can be no question. Fencing is a trouble to him, the perspiration runs down his face, and the queen says: *He's fat and scant of breath.* Can you fancy him from that anything else but a fair, easy-going fellow? Dark-complexioned men are seldom fat in their youth. And then his vacillating melancholy, soft-hearted grief and active indecision—do not they sit much better on such a figure than on a youth with brown curly locks from whom more resolution and lightness of action might be looked for?"

"You are spoiling all that I had imagined," cried Aurelia. "Away with your fat Hamlet! Pray don't introduce your corpulent prince to us! Give us rather a substitute that can charm and touch us. The author's intention is not so important to us as our own amusement; the charm we desire must have an affinity with ourselves."

CHAPTER VII.

ONE evening the party fell into a discussion as to the relative merits of the novel and the drama. Serlo assured them it was a useless and mistaken dispute: either could be first-rate of its kind, but each must keep within the limits peculiar to it.

"I cannot say that I am clear on the subject," said Wilhelm.

"Who is?" answered Serlo. "And yet," he added, "it might be worth while to try and ascertain the point a little more nearly."

! After talking the matter over for some time they came to pretty nearly the following results: We see human nature and human actions in the novel as well

as in the drama. The difference between these two kinds of fiction does not lie in their outward form alone, nor in the fact that in the one the characters are made to speak, while in the other what concerns them is for the most part told us. Unfortunately many dramas are merely romances thrown into dialogue, and it would not be impossible to write a play in a series of letters.

In a novel, opinions and events ought to be represented; in a drama, characters and actions. A novel should proceed slowly, and the opinions of the principal character should, in some way or other, retard the advance of the whole towards its *dénouement*. The drama on the contrary ought to advance rapidly; the character of its principal figure should be ever pressing towards the end, and only be retarded by surrounding circumstances. The hero of romance must be passive, or at any rate not eminently active; but deeds and effects are expected from the hero of a drama. Grandison, Clarissa, Pamela, the Vicar of Wakefield, even Tom Jones, if not passive, are still retarding personages, and all the events are to a certain extent modelled on their opinions. In the drama the hero moulds nothing to his own views; all things oppose him, and he either clears the hindrances from his path or is overpowered by them.

They also agreed that though chance may be allowed some scope in a novel, it must always be steered and led by the opinions of the characters; while, on the other hand, Fate, which, by means of circumstances independent of each other, impels human beings without any participation of their own towards some unforeseen catastrophe, can only find place in the drama: that chance may be allowed to produce pathetic but never tragic situations, while Fate must always be awful, and becomes in the highest sense tragic when linking together

in one sad bond guilty and innocent deeds which have been in no way connected.

These observations brought them back once more to Hamlet's strange character and the peculiarities of the play. Its hero, they said, had in fact only opinions; they are only events which occur to him, and for this reason the piece has something of the lengthy nature of a novel: but as the plan is sketched out by Fate—as the piece starts with one awful deed and its hero is continually urged forward to the commission of another, it is in reality in the highest sense tragic and can admit of none but a tragical conclusion.

Some readings of the piece were now to be held, to which Wilhelm looked forward with delight. He had collated the parts so that there could be no difficulty on that head. All the actors knew the piece, and he only tried to convince them, before beginning, of the importance of this reading-rehearsal. "Just," he said, "as we expect every musician to be able (at least in some measure) to play at sight, so every actor, indeed every educated person, ought to practise reading at sight, and learn to catch at once the character of a play, poem or tale so as to read it aloud well and fluently. All the learning-by-heart in the world is of no use until the actor has penetrated into the mind and meaning of the author; the mere letter is powerless."

Serlo assured them he would be indulgent at all the other rehearsals, even at the last general rehearsal itself, if justice were only done to the reading. "In general," he said, "there is nothing more ludicrous than to hear actors talk about study; I have just the same feeling as when I hear freemasons talk about work."

The rehearsal proved satisfactory, and it may be said that these few well-employed hours laid a foundation

for the high receipts and subsequent fame of the company.

"You did very right, my friend," said Serlo when they were alone, "to speak so seriously to our colleagues, but I fear that they will scarcely come up to your wishes."

"How do you mean?" said Wilhelm.

"Well," answered Serlo, "it has been my experience that easy as it is to set people's imagination in motion, and pleased as they are to listen to tales, any kind of imagination that you can speak of as productive, is rarely to be found among them. With actors this is particularly noticeable; they are all delighted enough to undertake a beautiful, telling, brilliant part, but it is seldom the case that any one of them does more than substitute himself self-complacently for the hero, without troubling his head in the least as to whether anybody else will look upon him in that light. It is given to very few indeed to grasp the author's thoughts vividly—to see what portion of their own individuality must be abandoned in order to do justice to their part—to comprehend how, by being firmly convinced themselves that they are some one else, they can force their audience to a like conviction, and how, by an inward truth in their faculty of conceiving and representing things, boards may be turned into a temple and pasteboard into a forest. This mental power, and this alone, deceives the spectator; this forged, feigned truth alone, produces effect and illusion; but who is there that understands it in the faintest degree? Do not let us therefore lay too much weight on mind and feeling. The surest way is to explain calmly to our friends the sense of the literal reading, and open their understandings. Those who possess talent will of themselves quickly find their way to a clever and feeling method of

expression; those who have none will not at all events act or speak quite incorrectly. In my experience there is no worse presumption, either among actors or men in general, than the fancying they can be clever and intellectual before they have understood or become conversant with the literal sense of the words used."

CHAPTER VIII.

WILHELM came very early to the first rehearsal and found himself alone on the boards. The house surprised him and brought back the strangest associations. The landscape scenery was arranged exactly as it had been in the theatre of his native town, on the morning of the very rehearsal at which Mariana had made her first eager confession of love to him. The peasants' houses were as like one another on the two stages as they are in the country; the real morning sun came in at a half-opened window-shutter and fell on part of a bench which was roughly fastened up near the door; but alas, it did not now, as then, fall on Mariana's figure. He sat down and thought over this strange conjunction of circumstances; he believed it must be a presentiment that he should perhaps see her again soon in this very place. Alas! it was nothing more than that a farce with this scenery was at that time very often given on the German stage.

His reflections were broken in upon by the arrival of the other actors, accompanied by two lovers of the stage and the green-room whom Wilhelm welcomed with enthusiasm. One of these men was slightly attached to Madame Melina, but the other's was a pure attachment

to the drama, and both were of that stamp which every good company ought to rejoice in securing as friends. You could hardly say which was predominant—their love for the stage or their knowledge of it. They were too fond of it to know it thoroughly and impartially, but they knew it well enough to appreciate what was good and proscribe what was worthless. Their love for the theatre was so strong that they could endure even mediocrity, but the glorious joy which anything really good afforded them, both in anticipation and recollection, it is impossible to express. The merely mechanical portion gave them pleasure, the intellectual put them into ecstasies, and it was so thoroughly their hobby that even a fragmentary rehearsal could throw them into a kind of illusion. In their eyes defects seemed to vanish into distance, while what was well done touched them like an object close at hand. In short they were amateurs whom every artist might have wished to secure for his own profession. Their favourite promenade was from the side-scenes to the pit, their pleasantest resting-place the dressing-room, their busiest occupation helping the actors to improve their attitudes, costumes, and mode of declaiming or reciting; their most animated conversation turned on the effect produced in the theatre, and their incessant and unwearying efforts were devoted to keeping up attention, activity and exactness in the actors, doing them many a service and kindness, and, without extravagant expense, procuring for the whole company many a pleasure. They had obtained for themselves exclusive permission to be present at every rehearsal and performance. On the subject of Hamlet they differed on some points with Wilhelm; here and there he gave way, maintaining his own opinion however in most cases, and their conversations together on

the matter helped to form his taste. He allowed the two friends to see how highly he valued them, and they on their side foresaw nothing less important than a new epoch for the German theatre as the result of their united exertions.

The presence of these two men was of great service to the rehearsals. They more especially convinced our actors that attitude and gesture must always be combined with the words at the rehearsals just as they purposed to exhibit them at the performances, and that everything must be mechanically united by the force of habit. Above all, they said, actors ought most carefully to avoid allowing themselves any vulgar movement of the hands during the rehearsal of a tragedy: a tragic actor who took snuff at a rehearsal always made them anxious, as most probably he would miss his pinch at the same place when he was acting before the public. Indeed they went so far as to hold that no one ought to rehearse his part in boots if it was to be acted in shoes. But nothing, they insisted, distressed them more than to see the actresses when rehearsing hide their hands in the folds of their dresses.

Another great good effected by the arguments of these two men was that all the actors learnt their military exercise. Where so many military parts occur in a play, they said nothing could look more miserable than a number of fellows in captains' and majors' uniforms waddling about the stage without the faintest trace of ever having been drilled.

Wilhelm and Laertes were the first to put themselves in the hands of a subaltern officer, continuing their fencing practice the while with great assiduity.

All this trouble did the two amateurs take in training a company that had come together in such a

happy fashion. They were providing for the future satisfaction of the public while that very public was often making merry over them and their so very evident hobby. Nobody knew how much reason there was to be thankful to these men, especially as they did not omit again and again to impress one weighty point on the actors: namely, that it was their duty to speak loudly and distinctly. Just on this point they met with more opposition and reluctance than they had expected. Most of the actors maintained that they could be heard well enough, but very few took any pains to make themselves so. Some laid the fault on the building, and others said it was impossible to scream when you had to speak naturally, secretly or tenderly.

Our two amateurs, having an unspeakable measure of patience, tried all means to clear up their confusion and get over their self-willed obstinacy. They spared neither argument nor flattery, and at last gained their end, Wilhelm's good example being of great use on this head. He asked them as an especial favour to take seats in some distant corner of the house during the rehearsals, and to knock the bench with a key whenever they were not able to hear him perfectly. His articulation was good, his pronunciation not exaggerated, he raised his voice gradually, and never screamed even in the most vehement passages. The tapping of the key was heard less and less at every rehearsal; by degrees the other actors submitted to the same operation, and at last there was reason to hope that the piece would be heard in every corner of the house.

From this example we can see how fond people are of gaining their end in their own way—how much pains must be taken to make them understand what is in reality perfectly obvious; and how very difficult it is

to make men perceive the primary conditions, under which alone what they themselves wish to accomplish can be effected.

CHAPTER IX.

THEY now went on preparing the scenery, dresses, and whatever else was wanting. Wilhelm had his particular fancies about certain scenes and passages, and to these Serlo gave way, partly in consideration of their agreement, partly from conviction, and partly because by so doing he hoped to win our friend over, and in future guide him more according to his own views.

Thus, for instance, at the first audience the king and queen were to be seated on the throne, the courtiers on either side and Hamlet in their midst, with no greater appearance of importance than the rest. "Hamlet's deportment," Wilhelm said, "must be quiet. His black dress distinguishes him sufficiently from the rest. He ought rather to keep in the back than in the foreground. Not until the audience is over and the king speaks to him as his son, ought he to come forward and the scene to take its course."

One great difficulty still proceeded from the two pictures to which Hamlet alludes so passionately in the scene with his mother. "In my opinion," said Wilhelm, "they ought both to be seen, in life-size, hanging at the back of the room near the principal door, and the portrait of the old king ought to be in complete armour—like the ghost—and to hang on the same side at which the ghost is to appear. I should like the figure to have its right hand raised as if commanding, to be partly turned away, and as if looking back over its shoulder,

so as to be exactly like the ghost at the moment in which the latter passes out through the door. It will produce a great effect if at that moment Hamlet looks at the ghost, and the queen at the picture. The step-father can be painted in the royal robes, only with a less imposing presence."

There were many more points of the same kind about which we may perhaps find some other opportunity of speaking.

"Are you inexorable," said Serlo, "that Hamlet must die at the end?"

"How can I keep him alive," said Wilhelm, "when the whole piece is pressing him to death? We've discussed that question so often already."

"But the public would like to keep him alive."

"I shall be delighted to do them any other favour, but this is impossible. We often wish that some good, useful man who is dying of a chronic disease could live longer; the family weeps and conjures the physician; he has no power to keep him in life; just so little power as the physician possesses to withstand a law of nature do we possess to command a recognised necessity of art. It is false kindness to the multitude to excite in their minds the sensations they *wish*, instead of those they *ought* to feel."

"The man who brings the money can have what goods he chooses," said Serlo.

"To a certain extent," answered Wilhelm; "but a large public is entitled to some respect and ought not to be treated like children whose money we want to get hold of. By giving them the best we must gradually inculcate a feeling and taste for the best; they will then lay out their money with twice as much pleasure, because their good sense—nay, even their reason—can find nothing

to reproach them with in such an outlay. We may coax and flatter them as we would some dear child—in order to improve and teach it; but not as men flatter the rich and great—in order to perpetuate errors by which the flatterers can profit.”

In this way they discussed many points, principally bearing on the question: what might they still venture to alter in the piece and what must remain untouched? We will not enter farther into the subject here, but may possibly at some future time lay the entire altered edition of Hamlet before those of our readers who might be interested in it.

CHAPTER X.

THE last general rehearsal was over; it had been immoderately long. Serlo and Wilhelm found that there was still much to be done and thought of; as, notwithstanding the time that had already been spent on the preparations, some very necessary arrangements had been pushed off to the last moment.

Thus, for instance, the pictures of the two kings were not yet finished, and the scene between Hamlet and his mother which they had hoped would produce such a great effect still looked very meagre, neither the ghost nor his painted likeness having as yet made their appearance. Serlo made a joke of the matter saying: “It would really be a terrible hoax if after all the ghost should disappoint us, the officers on guard have to fight with empty air and our prompter to supply the spirit’s speech from behind the scenes.”

“We won’t scare our strange friend away by unbelief,” answered Wilhelm; “he will not fail to come at

the right time and be a surprise to us as well as to the audience."

"I am sure," said Serlo, "I shall be heartily glad when the piece has been performed to-morrow. I did not think it would have given us so much trouble."

"But nobody," said Philine, "will be happier than I, little as my own part troubles me. To hear one thing eternally talked about, when after all nothing can come of it but a representation, which like so many others will one day be forgotten, is really more than my patience can stand. For Heaven's sake don't make such a fuss about the matter! The guests who just rise from table are sure to find some fault with every course; indeed, if you could hear them afterwards at home, they can hardly understand how they got through such a miserable time."

"If you will allow me, my pretty child," said Wilhelm, "I will turn your simile to my own advantage. Think what nature, art, commerce and industry must bring together before such an entertainment can be given. How many years must the stag live in the forest, the fish in the sea, before they are fit to appear at our table! What multifarious duties fall upon the mistress of the house and the cook in the kitchen! And then at dessert, how heedlessly and as a matter of course we sip the results of so much care and anxiety on the part of vine-dressers in distant lands, mariners and cellarers! But would you wish these people not to work, provide or prepare? would you wish the master of the house to take no thought in collecting and storing up these things, because after all the enjoyment of them is but transitory? No enjoyment is transitory; it leaves an impression behind; that impression is abiding, and whatever is done earnestly and industriously imparts even to the mere

looker-on a hidden power whose effects spread farther than we can ever know."

"It's all the same to me," replied Philine; "it has only given me one more opportunity of noticing how you men are always contradicting yourselves. With all your conscientious scruples about mutilating the great poet you have left the most beautiful thought out of the piece."

"The most beautiful?" exclaimed Wilhelm.

"Certainly, the most beautiful; one that even Hamlet himself was proud of."

"And that is —?" enquired Serlo.

"If you wore a wig," replied Philine, "I should just gently take it off, for it seems to me you want your understanding opened."

The others began to think and the conversation came to a stand-still. They had risen, it was getting late; they seemed to meditate parting for the night. While they were standing in this undecided frame of mind, Philine began to sing a little song to a very pretty, pleasing tune:

"Sing not thus in notes of sadness
Of the loneliness of night;
No! 'tis made for social gladness,
Converse sweet and love's delight.

"As to rugged man his wife is
For his fairest half decreed,
So dear night the half of life is,
And the fairest half indeed.

"Who could hail the day with pleasure
Which but interrupts our joys,
Scares us from our dreams of leisure
With its glare and irksome noise?

"But when night is come, and glowing
Is the lamp's attemper'd ray
And from lip to lip are flowing
Love and mirth, in sparkling play;

"When the fiery boy that wildly
Gambols in his wayward mood,
Calms to rest, disporting mildly,
By some trivial gift subdued ;

"When the nightingale is trilling
Songs of love to lovers' ears,
Which to hearts with sorrow thrilling
Seem but sighs, and waken tears ;

"How, with pulses lightly bounding,
Leaps thy heart to hear the bell,
Which the hour of midnight sounding
Doth of rest and safety tell !

"Then, dear heart, this comfort borrow
In the long day's lingering light :
Ev'ry day hath its own sorrow
Gladness cometh with the night."*

She made a slight bow at the end and Serlo shouted "Bravo, bravo!" She skipped out of the room and as she went down the stairs they could hear her singing, and the tap of her little heels.

Serlo went into the next room and Aurelia, as Wilhelm wished her good-night, stood opposite to him a few moments and then said:

"How I dislike that woman! she is thoroughly repugnant to me even in the merest trifles. Those brown eye-lashes with her fair hair which Serlo thinks so charming I dislike even to look at, and that scar on her forehead is so vulgar and repulsive to me that I am always inclined to retire ten steps when she comes near. The other day she was telling as a good joke that when she was a child her father had thrown a plate at her head and she bore the mark to this day. It is well that she is branded on eyes and forehead, that every one may beware of her."

* Translated by Mr. Theodore Martin, and inserted by his kind permission.

Wilhelm did not answer and Aurelia went on, her annoyance apparently growing as she spoke:

"I hate her so much that it's almost impossible to me to speak a friendly civil word to her, and yet she will insinuate herself. I only wish we could get rid of her! And you too, my friend, have a certain courteous way of treating her, a manner which grieves me deeply; your attention to her borders on respect, and Heaven knows she has no right to that."

"Whatever she may be," answered Wilhelm, "I owe her gratitude. Her conduct deserves blame, but I must do justice to her character."

"Character!" exclaimed Aurelia, "you can't believe that such a creature has any character! Oh, you men! that shows what you are; you are really worthy of such women."

"Do you suspect me, my friend?" said Wilhelm. "I am ready to give an account of every minute I have spent in her society."

"Well, well," said Aurelia, "it is getting late now, so we won't discuss the matter. You're all alike, all of you. Good night, my friend! good night, my fine bird of Paradise!"

Wilhelm asked what he had done to earn this title.

"Another time," she replied, "another time. They say it has no feet, hovers in the air and lives on æther; but that's a fable," she went on, "a poetic fiction. Good night; dream pleasant dreams if you have the good fortune."

She went into her room and left him alone; he hastened to his own and paced up and down it in a half-vexed frame of mind. Aurelia's joking, and yet decided, tone had offended him. He felt her injustice to himself deeply. He could not be rude or unkind to Philine;

she had never done him any harm, and besides, he was so far from feeling the slightest affection for her, that he could stand a severe self-examination steadfastly and proudly.

He was on the point of undressing and was just going up to his bed to draw the curtains aside when, to his great amazement, he beheld a pair of women's slippers at the bedside. One had fallen down, the other was standing on its sole.—They were Philine's, he knew them only too well; he fancied too that the curtains were in disorder, indeed it seemed as if they moved as he looked; he stood gazing fixedly at the bed.

A new feeling, which he believed was annoyance, took away his breath; and after a short pause, during which he recovered himself, he called out in a calm tone:

"Get up, Philine! what is the meaning of this? Have you forgotten all prudence and decency? Are we to be the talk of the whole house to-morrow?"

Nothing moved.

"I am not joking," he said. "I am a very bad person to try such tricks on."

Not a sound! not a movement!

Angry and resolute, he went up to the bed and pulled the curtains open. "Get up!" he said, "unless you mean me to give up this room to you for the night."

Great was his astonishment at finding the bed empty, the pillow and coverlets lying in peaceful rest. He looked round and searched everywhere, but there was no sign of the rogue. Nothing was to be seen either behind the bed, the stove or the wardrobe. He searched still more diligently;—indeed a malicious spectator might have said he searched as if he wished to find.

There was no thought of sleep; he placed the slippers

on his table and paced up and down the room, stopping every now and then by the said table; a roguish little spirit who was watching him maintains that he was busy with these charming little slippers a great part of the night: that he looked at, handled and played with them, not without interest, and only threw himself on the bed in his clothes towards morning, where he fell asleep and had the strangest, most fanciful dreams.

Indeed he was still asleep when Serlo came in, calling out: "Where are you? What! still in bed? Impossible! I have been looking for you in the theatre; there's a great deal still to be done there."

CHAPTER XI.

THE morning and afternoon passed quickly away. The theatre was full already, and Wilhelm hastened to put on his dress. This was not such a pleasant task as before, when he tried it on for the first time; now he was only dressing in order to be ready. He came into the green-room when he had finished; a universal outcry arose from the women that nothing was right: the handsome plume was on one side, the buckle awry: they began to undo, to sew and pin together again. The symphony began, Philine had still some objection to make to his ruff, Aurelia many to his cloak: "Leave me alone, children," he said; "I should not make a good Hamlet without some negligence in my dress." They would not leave him however, but went on trimming him up and making improvements. The symphony was over; the piece had begun. He looked once more in the glass, pulled his hat down still lower on his forehead, and re-touched the paint on his face.

At this moment some one rushed in, crying: "The ghost! the ghost!"

Wilhelm had had no time during the whole day to think about his chief anxiety: whether the ghost would appear or not. This was now removed, and they might now expect one of the most remarkable strangers' parts that had ever been given. The stage-director came in to make various enquiries; Wilhelm had no time to look at the ghost, and hurried to take his place near the throne, where the king and queen, surrounded by the court, were already seated in all their glory. He only caught the last words spoken by Horatio, who was talking in a bewildered fashion about the appearance of the ghost and seemed almost to have forgotten his part.

The curtain rose and Wilhelm saw the crowded house before him. After Horatio had made his speech and been dismissed by the king, he pressed up to Hamlet, and as if presenting himself to the prince, murmured, "It's the Devil himself in armour; he has frightened us all."

In the interim nothing was to be seen but two tall men in white cloaks standing in the side-scenes, and Wilhelm, believing that in his absence of mind, uneasiness and embarrassment, he had spoilt the first monologue, really made his entrance into the chill and dreary theatrical winter-night in a most comfortless frame of mind, notwithstanding the lively applause that had accompanied his exit just before. He collected himself, however, and gave that most appropriate passage about the "wassel-keeping" and "heavy-headed revelling" of the Danes with quite the requisite amount of indifference; while doing so he forgot, and made the audience forget, the ghost, and was really terrified when Horatio called out: "Look, my Lord, it comes!" He turned round,

eagerly, and the tall, noble figure, the soft inaudible step, the easy way in which it moved under the apparently heavy weight of its armour, made such an impression on him that he stood as if petrified, and could only exclaim in a low tone, "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" He stood staring at the vision, drew breath two or three times, and then uttered his address to the ghost in such a confused, broken and forced manner as could not have been attained by the most practised art.

His own translation of this passage was of great service to him. He had kept close to the original, the words of which seemed to him to express a startled, terrified, and horror-stricken state of mind as no other words could have done.

"Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from Heaven or blasts from Hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee; I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O answer me!"

The greatest effect could be perceived among the audience. The ghost beckoned and the prince followed amid the loudest applause.

The scene changed, and when they reappeared on the distant part of the platform, the ghost stopped suddenly and turned round so that Hamlet was a little too near it. Eagerly and curiously did he gaze between the bars of the lowered vizor, but could only see a pair of deep-set eyes and a well-formed nose. He stood before the ghost scanning him timidly, but no sooner did the first tones issue from the helmet—no sooner did he hear a melodious though somewhat hoarse voice uttering the words: "I am thy father's spirit," than he stepped back shuddering, and the whole audience shuddered with him.

The voice seemed familiar to them all; Wilhelm fancied he noticed a likeness to his own father. These strange feelings and associations and his curiosity to discover who this remarkable friend could be, mingled with the greatest anxiety lest he should offend—indeed a feeling that as an actor it would be indelicate to approach him too nearly at such a moment—influenced Wilhelm in opposite directions. During the ghost's long narrative he changed his position so often, seemed so irresolute and perplexed, so attentive and yet so absent, that his acting excited as general an admiration as the ghost a universal horror. The latter spoke rather in a tone of deep displeasure and annoyance than of grief or distress, but it was a mental annoyance, a slowly-growing and inextinguishable displeasure. It was the dejection of a noble mind cut off from everything earthly and at the same time conquered by, and sinking under, infinite woe. At last the ghost sank down into the earth, but in a strange fashion: a thin grey transparent gauze seemed like a vapour to rise out of the ground where he sank into it and to envelope and draw him down with itself.

Then Hamlet's friends came back and swore by the sword, and the old mole was so busy underground that wherever they stood he called out "Swear!" beneath their very feet, and they hastened from one spot to another as if the earth burnt beneath them. Wherever they stood, too, a little flame appeared out of the ground, and this increased the effect and produced the deepest impression on their audience.

After this the piece went on its way uninterruptedly; nothing miscarried, everything was a success; the public testified their satisfaction, and the spirits and courage of the actors seemed to increase with every scene.

CHAPTER XII.

THE curtain fell and applause resounded from every corner of the house. The four royal corpses jumped up nimbly and embraced each other for joy. Polonius and Ophelia came out of their graves and listened with great delight to the vehement clapping with which Horatio was welcomed when he appeared before the curtain to announce the next performance. The people would not hear of anything fresh; they demanded impetuously a repetition of that night's piece.

"We've really had a success," exclaimed Serlo, "and we won't have another reasonable word this evening. Everything depends on the first impression, and no one ought to blame an actor for being cautious or even self-willed on making his first appearance."

The ticket-taker came and handed over a heavy amount. "We've made a capital *début*," he cried, "and the prepossession in our favour will be of good service to us. And now where's the promised supper? It ought to relish to-night."

They had agreed to have a supper among themselves, in their theatrical dresses. Wilhelm had undertaken to find a room, and Madame Melina to see to the viands.

A room generally used for scene-painting had been cleaned and furbished up in the best way possible, hung round with little decorations and so arranged as to look partly like a garden, partly like a colonnade. On coming in, the company were dazzled by the light of many candles, which shed their festive brightness over a prettily ornamented and well-appointed banquet, through clouds of the sweetest perfumes which were burning in

abundance beneath them. They were loud in praise of the arrangements, and really took their places for once with dignity; it was as if a royal family had met together in the kingdom of spirits. Wilhelm sat between Aurelia and Madame Melina, Serlo between Philine and Elmira; no one was discontented either with himself or with his place.

The two amateurs were present also, and added to the pleasure of the party. During the performance they had left their places more than once and had come upon the stage, where they could not say enough about the satisfaction felt by themselves and the audience; now they went into detail and every one received his full share of praise.

With incredible eagerness and vivacity one good piece of acting after another was brought to notice, passage after passage mentioned and praised. The prompter, who had modestly taken his place at the lower end of the table, was highly commended for his rugged Pyrrhus; Hamlet's and Laertes' fencing practice could not be sufficiently extolled; Ophelia's grief was beyond expression beautiful and sublime. As to Polonius they had no words for his acting; and in fact every one present could hear his own praise in the praise awarded to and by his fellows.

Nor did the absent ghost go without his share of admiration: his voice was spoken of as having been very good and his part given with a broad grand sense of its meaning, but what had astonished them most was his perfect acquaintance with whatever had been done and said by the company. He resembled the painted portrait as completely as if he had stood to the artist, and the two amateurs could not sufficiently extol the awful and ghastly effect which his entrance so near his own likeness;

and his passing before it had produced. Truth and error, they said, had mingled so strangely and they had really felt convinced that the queen did not see the ghost. Madame Melina was very much commended for having gazed steadfastly up at the picture while Hamlet was pointing to the spirit.

On enquiring how it had managed to slip in unobserved, the stage-manager said that two tall figures in white cloaks and hoods, so much alike that you could not distinguish the one from the other, had come in at a back door, which was usually blocked up by the decorations, but to-night (the Gothic saloon having been used) had been left free, and that probably after the third act they had left by the same door.

Serlo thought the best thing in the ghost was his not having moaned and lamented so pitifully, and having at the end even introduced a passage better suited to so great a hero and calculated to encourage and animate his son. Wilhelm had not forgotten the words and promised to add them to his manuscript.

In their merriment they had not noticed the absence of the harper and the two children. Soon however they appeared, and in a manner very pleasant to behold. They came in together, decked out in a romantic fashion, Felix beating the triangle, Mignon the tambourine, and the old man playing on his harp which, heavy as it was, he had suspended round his neck and was carrying before him. They made a procession round the table singing all kinds of songs. Good things were handed to them, and the party thought they were doing the children a kindness by giving them as much sweet wine as they liked to drink, they themselves having indulged without stint in the delicious contents of some hampers which had arrived that evening, as a present from their two

amateur friends. The children continued their dancing and singing; no one had ever seen Mignon in such wild spirits. She beat her tambourine in the most graceful lively way; at times rubbing her finger firmly up and down the parchment, at others striking it with the back of her hand, then with her knuckles, or, in alternately changing measure against her head and knees, then shaking it so that its little bells alone were heard, and thus bringing a great variety of tones out of her simple instrument. After going on in this noisy way for some time the two children seated themselves in an armchair which had been left empty, exactly opposite to Wilhelm.

"Leave that chair alone!" said Serlo: "it's put there for the ghost, and if he comes you may fare badly."

"I am not afraid of him," cried Mignon: "if he comes we will get up. He is my uncle, he will not hurt me."

No one understood these words except those who had heard her call her supposed father "the great Devil."

The company looked at each other and were strengthened in their suspicion that Serlo was in the secret of the ghost. They chatted and drank, the girls from time to time casting timid glances towards the door.

The children, as they sat in the great armchair opposite with their heads only just above the table, looked like puppets in a Punch and Judy show and began to act a little piece in that style. Mignon imitated the squeaking tone famously, and at last they knocked their heads together and against the edge of the table in a fashion which only wooden dolls could have endured. Mignon grew so madly excited, that heartily as the company had been amused at first by the fun, they were at last obliged to interfere. Their persuasions however had

but small effect; she jumped up and danced wildly round the table with her tambourine in her hand. Her hair floated behind her, and with her head thrown back and her limbs as it were flung into the air she seemed like one of those Maenades whose wild and almost impossible attitudes amaze us so much on the ancient monuments.

Roused by the children's talent and the noise they made, every member of the party tried to contribute something for the amusement of the rest. The women sang catches, Laertes imitated a nightingale, and the Pedant gave a pianissimo concerto on the jew's-harp. Meanwhile every one carried on with his or her neighbour some game in which the hands had constant opportunities of meeting, and between divers couples a tender affection not destitute of hope was expressed in this wise. Madame Melina especially made no effort to conceal her evident affection for Wilhelm. It was already very late, and Aurelia—almost the only one who was still perfect mistress of herself—rose from her seat, to intimate to the others that it was time to separate.

As farewell, Serlo gave an exhibition of fireworks, by imitating with his mouth in a most incomprehensible manner the sound of rockets, squibs and catherine-wheels. You had only to shut your eyes and the illusion was perfect. Meanwhile every one had risen; the gentlemen offered their arms to the ladies to conduct them home. Wilhelm and Aurelia walked last. On the stairs they were met by the stage-manager, who said: "Here is the veil in which the ghost disappeared; it caught in the trap-door and we have just found it."

"A curious relic!" said Wilhelm and took it with him.

As he spoke he felt his left arm laid hold of and a sharp pain. Mignon had hidden herself, seized him

and bitten his arms. She ran past him downstairs and vanished.

No sooner were our party in the open air than nearly every one perceived that they had been drinking too freely, and disappeared one by one without taking leave.

Directly Wilhelm reached his room he threw off his clothes, put out the light and hastened to bed. He was almost asleep when a noise which seemed to come from behind the stove roused him. The vision of the armed king was hovering before his heated fancy; but as he raised himself in bed to address the spectre, his mouth was closed by eager kisses, and tender arms encircled him which he had not courage to push away.

CHAPTER XIII.

WILHELM started up the next morning with an uneasy feeling, and found himself alone. He had not entirely slept away the effects of the last night's revel, and the remembrance of his nightly visitor was disturbing. At first his suspicion fell on Philine, and yet there were reasons which led him to think it could not have been she. He jumped out of bed, and as he was dressing noticed that the door, which he was accustomed to lock, was only pushed to; he could not remember whether he had locked it the night before or not.

But what seemed strangest of all to him was the ghost's veil, which he found lying on his bed. He had brought it up with him and most probably thrown it there himself. It was a piece of gray gauze and on the hem he noticed some writing embroidered in black. He unfolded it and read the following words: "For the first

and last time! Fly, young man! Fly!" He was perplexed; he did not know what to say to this.

At that moment Mignon came in with his breakfast, Wilhelm was astonished, almost frightened, at the child's appearance. She seemed to have grown taller in the night; she came up to him in so noble and dignified a manner and looked so earnestly into his eyes that he could not bear her gaze. She was accustomed to take his hand, kiss his cheek, lips, arm or shoulder when she brought his breakfast, but to-day, after having put his room in order, she went silently away without having even touched his hand.

A reading rehearsal was to be held that day; the time agreed upon arrived, and the party assembled, but all more or less out of sorts from the effects of last night's revel. Wilhelm collected his thoughts as much as he possibly could, unwilling so soon to offend against principles he had so often and so urgently preached. Constant practice helped him in this; indeed in every art, practice and habit must be called in, to fill up the gaps so often left by genius and the mood of the moment.

But this occasion gave room for perceiving the truth of the remark, that no condition of life which is to be lasting—which is in fact to become our calling and in which we are to live—ought to be begun with a festive celebration. We should only celebrate what is completed; preliminary festivities exhaust the joy and strength which are to nourish our efforts, and to sustain us through the continuous labour which must follow. Of all festivals surely a wedding is the most incongruous; that, more than any other, ought to be celebrated in quietness, humility and hope.

The day crept on, and never in Wilhelm's life had any day seemed so commonplace. In the evening people

yawned instead of conversing; their interest in Hamlet was exhausted, and they found it tiresome rather than pleasant that the piece was to be given a second time the next day. Wilhelm produced the ghost's veil; it seemed to prove that he was not coming again. Serlo more especially was of this opinion, and indeed he seemed to have been taken into the counsels of this wonderful apparition. But the words: "Fly! young man! Fly!" were inexplicable; Serlo could not possibly be in agreement with any one whose intention it was to scare away his best actor.

Of course now they were obliged to give the ghost's part to the old Blusterer, and the king to the Pedant. They both declared they had already studied the parts and this was not to be wondered at, for the many rehearsals, and the thorough discussion of the piece in all its details, had given them so complete an acquaintance with it that the actors could all have changed characters without difficulty. Still a few passages were quickly rehearsed, and they separated at a sufficiently late hour. As she took leave of Wilhelm for the night Philine whispered: "I must fetch my slippers; you won't bolt your door?" These words put him into some perplexity on reaching his room: they strengthened his supposition that she must have been his secret visitor—a supposition to which we ourselves feel compelled to lean, especially as we cannot discover on what grounds he had been led to doubt it and to indulge another and stranger suspicion. He paced his room restlessly, and really had not yet pushed the bolt.

Suddenly Mignon darted in and seized hold of him, crying: "Master, save the house! it is on fire!" Wilhelm sprang out, and was met at his door by a thick cloud of smoke coming down the staircase which led to the upper

story. The cry of "Fire!" could be heard already from the street below and through the smoke the old harper, harp in hand, was coming down the stairs, breathless. Aurelia rushed out of her room and threw little Felix into Wilhelm's arms.

"Save the child!" she cried: "we'll see to the rest."

Wilhelm, not fancying the danger to be so great, was bent on discovering the origin of the flames that he might choke the fire at its source. He gave the child to the old man, telling him to hasten down a winding stone staircase which led through a little vaulted garden-house into the garden, and to remain with the children in the open air. Mignon took a candle to light him down. Wilhelm then begged Aurelia to save her things by the same means. He himself made his way upstairs through the smoke and exposed himself to danger, but all in vain. The flames seemed to come from the next house, they had already caught the wooden flooring and a light staircase, and others, who, like him, had hastened thither to help, were suffering also from the smoke and flames. Still he encouraged them, called for water, conjured them to dispute every step with the flames, and promised not to leave them alone. But at that moment Mignon dashed up the stairs, crying: "Master, save your Felix! the old man is mad, he is killing him." Wilhelm rushed down without stopping to think, Mignon at his heels.

On the last steps leading into the garden-house, he stood still with horror. Great bundles of straw and brush-wood, which had been heaped up there, were all in a blaze. Felix lay screaming on the ground, and the old man was standing on one side, by the wall, with his head bent down. "What are you doing, miserable man?" cried Wilhelm. He did not answer; Mignon raised little Felix and dragged the boy with difficulty out into the

garden. Wilhelm meanwhile tried to stifle the fire, and pull the burning materials apart, but the flames only blazed up higher and stronger for his efforts, and at last, with burnt hair and eye-lashes, he too was obliged to take refuge in the garden, dragging the old man with him, who, though the fire had already singed his long beard, followed most unwillingly.

Wilhelm hurried at once to find the children. They were seated on the steps of a little summer-house at some distance, and Mignon was doing her utmost to soothe the little boy. Wilhelm took him on his lap, questioned and felt him, but could bring no connected account out of either of the children.

Meanwhile the fire had gained power, had caught two or three more houses and was lighting up the whole neighbourhood. Wilhelm looked at the boy by the red light of the flames; he could discover neither wounds, blood nor even a bruise or swelling. He felt his body all over, but the child showed no sign of pain, grew pacified by degrees and at last began to wonder at the flames and to enjoy watching the rafters and beams which burnt in regular order like a beautiful illumination.

Wilhelm never thought of the clothes and other property which it was possible he might have lost; he felt deeply how precious these two human beings, whom he had just seen escaping from such a terrible danger, were to him. He pressed the little one to his heart with quite a new feeling, and would have embraced Mignon too in his glad tenderness, but she gently turned away, took his hand and held it fast.

"Master," she said, (she had never till that evening called him by this name, but at first "Sir" and later "Father") "Master, we have escaped a great danger; your Felix was very near death."

By dint of much questioning Wilhelm learnt that on reaching the garden-house the harper had snatched the candle from her hand and set the straw on fire in a moment; he had then put Felix down on the ground, had laid his hands on the child's head with strange gestures, and drawn a knife as though he would offer him in sacrifice. She had sprung forward and seized the knife, and on hearing her screams, some one belonging to the house who was carrying things into the garden to save them from the fire, had come to her help, but in the confusion this person must have gone away again and left the old man alone with the child.

Two or three houses were now in flames. The fire in the vaulted room leading into the garden had prevented any one from escaping thither, and Wilhelm was more perplexed as to what had become of his friends than as to his own possessions. He did not dare to leave the children and had to watch the evil increasing from moment to moment.

He passed some hours thus, in great suspense and anxiety. Felix had fallen asleep on his knees; Mignon lay at his side holding his hand fast. At last the fire was subdued by the measures which had been adopted; the burnt buildings fell in, morning dawned, the children began to shiver, and in his thin dress he too began to feel the falling dew almost insupportable. He led them to the smouldering ruins, where the heaps of charcoal and ashes gave forth a comfortable warmth.

Daybreak brought all the friends and acquaintances together. No lives had been lost and not much property.

Wilhelm's box turned up too and, as it was now nearly ten o'clock, Serlo urged them to rehearse at least a few scenes from Hamlet which had been allotted to

fresh actors. But before they could do this the question had to be discussed with the police authorities. The clergy demanded that the theatre should be closed after such a token of the Divine displeasure; Serlo on the contrary maintained that, partly to compensate him for the losses he had sustained in the previous night, and partly as a means of cheering the terrified minds of the public, the performance of an interesting play was more than ever appropriate. His opinion made its way and they had a full house. The actors played with unusual fire and with more passionate freedom than the first time. The spectators, whose feelings had been wrought up to a high pitch of excitement by the terrible scene of the past night, and whom the *ennui* of a dissipated, spoilt day had made all the more eager for a pleasant evening's amusement, were more open to impression from what is strange and uncommon. The greater part of the audience had been drawn thither by the fame of the first performance at which they had not been present; they could therefore institute comparisons between the two. The old Blusterer acted quite in the spirit of the unknown ghost, and the Pedant had evidently watched his predecessor carefully, besides which his own mean and pitiful manners stood him in such good stead, that Hamlet really did him no injustice in calling him, notwithstanding his purple cloak and ermine collar, "a king of shreds and patches."

Never perhaps did any one reach a throne in a stranger fashion; and though the others, and more especially Philine, made themselves merry over his new dignity, he let them know that the Count, who was a great judge, had prophesied this and even more of him. Philine however exhorted him to humility, and declared she would take an opportunity of powdering his coat-

sleeves, that he might not forget that unfortunate night at the castle but learn to wear his crown with modesty and discretion.

CHAPTER XIV.

As they had been obliged to take what lodgings they could find in the hurry of the moment, the company had become dispersed. Wilhelm had taken a fancy to the summer-house on the steps of which he had passed the night; he easily obtained the key and fitted it up for himself, but as Aurelia's new lodging was very small he was obliged to keep Felix, and Mignon would not leave the boy.

The children took possession of a pretty room in the upper floor, and Wilhelm took up his abode in the larger room beneath. The children were asleep but he could not rest.

Close to the fresh and pleasant garden, over which the full moon had just risen and was pouring down a glorious light, stood the melancholy mass of smoking ruins; the air was very pleasant and the night remarkably lovely. As they came out of the theatre Philine had brushed against his elbow and whispered a few words which he had not understood. He was confused and annoyed and knew neither what to do nor to expect. Philine had avoided him lately; and this was the first time she had again given him a sign. The door which he had been asked not to lock was now, alas, burnt, and the little slippers consumed by the flames. How the fair Philine was to get into the garden, if that were her intention, he could not tell. He did not wish to see

her, and yet he longed for an opportunity of explaining matters.

But what lay still heavier at his heart was the fate of the harper, who had not been seen since the night of the fire. Wilhelm was afraid that on removing the rubbish his dead body would be found beneath it. He had concealed from every one a suspicion which had arisen in his own mind, that the old man had caused the fire: he had been the first person Wilhelm had met coming from the smoking and burning upper floor, and his despair in the garden-room seemed the natural result of such a dreadful deed. And yet at the search set on foot by the police it had been pronounced probable that the fire had originated in the third house from their own and had crept along under the roofs.

Wilhelm was seated in an arbour turning all these things over in his mind, when he heard some one steal softly by in one of the neighbouring walks, and recognised the harper by the sad song which soon met his ear. He could understand it without difficulty; it contained the comfort sought by a miserable creature who feels himself on the verge of insanity. Unfortunately Wilhelm only remembered the last verse.

“Stealing to your doors you’ll see me,
Mild and quiet there I’ll stay;
Kindly hands will food provide me
Ere I wander on my way.
Each will feel his own lot gladness
When my careworn face appears:
Each will weep for very sadness,
And I know not why those tears?”

As he sang the last words he reached the garden-door, which led into a retired street. Finding it fastened he was just going to climb the fence, but Wilhelm held him back and spoke a few kind words to him. The old

man begged him to unlock the gate, saying he must and would make his escape. Wilhelm represented to him that though he might be able to escape from the garden he could not leave the town without being seen, and pointed out the suspicions to which such a step would expose him. All in vain! the old man was not to be moved. But neither would Wilhelm yield, and at last, half by force, he succeeded in getting him into the summer-house where he shut himself up with him and entered into a strange conversation. This however we will rather omit than communicate in detail, as we do not wish to torment our readers with incoherent ideas and distressing emotions.

CHAPTER XV.

OUT of the great perplexity Wilhelm felt as to what was best to be done with this old man, shewing as he did such unmistakeable signs of madness, he was delivered the next morning by Laertes. The latter, in his habitual wanderings, had met in some coffee-house a man who only a short time before had been suffering from the most violent attacks of melancholy. He had been entrusted to the care of a country parson who had made it his especial business to treat patients of this description. His treatment in this instance too had been successful: the clergyman was still in the town and the family of his recovered patient were showing him great honour.

Wilhelm set out at once to look for this man, told him the circumstances and entered into an agreement with him. They managed by means of pretexts to put the old harper into his hands, but the parting was very painful to Wilhelm, and only the hope of his recovery

could in any degree reconcile him to the fact that he should not see him every day as usual and hear his tender songs, so full of thought and feeling. The harp had been burnt, but another was found and given him for the journey.

Mignon's small wardrobe too had been consumed by the fire, and when the question of buying fresh clothes was discussed Aurelia proposed that at last she should be dressed like a girl.

"No, no," cried Mignon, "not now!" and insisted so earnestly on keeping her old style of dress that they were obliged to yield.

The company had not much time for reflection: one performance followed on another.

Wilhelm often listened in order to ascertain the opinion of the public, but seldom did a voice reach his ears that spoke as he would have had it; on the contrary he often heard what saddened or annoyed him. For instance: soon after the first performance of Hamlet he heard a young fellow relating in animated fashion how thoroughly he had enjoyed that evening at the theatre. Wilhelm listened, and heard to his confusion that the young man had kept his hat on to the annoyance of those sitting behind him, had obstinately insisted on retaining it throughout the entire piece and was now glorying in the recollection of this heroic exploit.

Another maintained that Wilhelm had acted Laertes very well, but that he had not been so satisfied with the actor who had given Hamlet. This mistake was not quite unnatural, as there was some resemblance, though a very slight one, between Wilhelm and Laertes.

A third praised his acting, particularly in the scene with his mother, and was only sorry that just at the most passionate moment a white string had appeared

from beneath his waistcoat, which had greatly disturbed the illusion.

Various changes meanwhile had taken place within the company. Since the evening of the fire Philine had not shown the faintest sign of a wish to approach Wilhelm. She had, it would seem intentionally, taken a lodging at some distance from his, was much with Elmira and came more seldom to see Serlo, a fact which of course was agreeable to Aurelia. But Serlo, who still liked Philine, visited her from time to time, more especially as he hoped to find Elmira with her. One evening he took Wilhelm with him. On coming in they were both much astonished to see Philine in the inner room in the arms of a young officer wearing a red uniform with white trousers; his face was turned from them. Philine came into the ante-room to meet her visitors, closing the door after her. "You've surprised me in the midst of a most strange adventure," she exclaimed.

"Not so very strange," said Serlo. "Come, let us have a look at your handsome young friend; he's much to be envied. You've drilled us so well, you know, that we shall not dare to be jealous."

"I must allow you to keep your suspicions for a time," said Philine in a joking tone, "but I assure you it is only one of my own female friends who wants to stay here a few days *incognito*. You shall hear her history some day, and perhaps even make the interesting girl's acquaintance, in which case I shall most likely have occasion to practise all the modesty and forbearance I possess, for I am afraid the gentlemen will forget their old friend in their new acquaintance."

Wilhelm stood petrified, for the first glimpse of the uniform had reminded him of Mariana's dear little red

coat; it was her figure too and the same fair hair, only the officer had seemed a little too tall.

"For Heaven's sake!" he cried, "let us know more of your friend; let us see this girl in disguise. You have let us into the secret already; we'll promise—we'll swear to be silent; only let us see her."

"Ah! how eager and excited he is!" exclaimed Philine. "Come, come, a little patience only, just a little calmness; for nothing can be done to-day."

"Only tell us her name," said Wilhelm.

"That would be a pretty secret," answered Philine.

"Well, at least her Christian name?"

"If you like to guess it, I've no objection; but I shall not allow more than three guesses. You might take me through the whole calendar at that rate."

"Good," said Wilhelm. "Cecilia, then?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"Henrietta?"

"Quite wrong. You had better take care. You'll have to sleep off your curiosity."

Wilhelm hesitated and trembled; he tried to open his mouth, but speech failed him. At last he stammered out, "Mariana?"

"Bravo!" cried Philine, spinning round on her heel, as was her usual habit.

Not a word more could Wilhelm bring out, and Serlo, not noticing his agitation, went on pressing Philine to open the door.

Their astonishment may therefore be conceived, when Wilhelm suddenly and angrily interrupted their bantering, threw himself at Philine's feet and began to beg and conjure her in the most passionate way.

"Let me see this girl," he cried; "she is mine, it must be my own Mariana. She whom I have longed for

every day of my life; she who is still worth more to me than all the other women in the world. At least go in and tell her that I am here—that the man is here whose first love and whose whole youthful happiness were bound up in her. Tell her he will justify himself for having forsaken her so unkindly, he will entreat her forgiveness, and will grant her his for whatever wrong she may have done him; he will never even make any further claims upon her, if he can only see her once more and know that she is alive and happy!”

Philine shook her head and answered: “Gently, gently, my friend! Don't let us deceive ourselves; if this girl should really be your friend we must be very cautious, for she does not in the least expect to see you here. Affairs of quite a different kind have brought her hither, and you ought to know that it's pleasanter to meet a ghost than an old lover at the wrong time. I will ask her about it and prepare her, and we will consider what is to be done. To-morrow you shall have a note from me to say whether you may come, and if so at what time. You had better follow my directions punctually, for I vow that no one shall set eyes on this charming creature against my will or hers. In future I shall keep my doors better locked, and I think you will not care to visit me with axes and hatchets.”

Wilhelm conjured her, Serlo used persuasion, but all was in vain; the friends were obliged to leave both her rooms and the house.

Every one can imagine what a restless night Wilhelm spent, and how slowly the hours of the next day passed in waiting for Philine's letter. Unfortunately he had to act that night, and never had he gone through greater torment. When the piece was over he rushed to Philine's lodgings, without asking whether he was

invited or not. He found her doors closed and the people of the house said that Mademoiselle had driven off that morning with a young officer: she had certainly spoken of returning in a few days, but they did not believe it, as she had paid her bill and taken all her things with her.

Wilhelm was out of his senses at hearing this news. He went off to Laertes at once, proposed that they should follow her, and, cost what it might, obtain some certain information about her companion. Laertes however gave his friend a lecture for behaving in such a passionate, credulous fashion. "I'll wager," he said, "that after all it's no one but Friedrich. I know positively that the boy is of a good family; he's madly in love with that girl, and has probably coaxed enough money out of his relations to enable him to live with her again for a time."

Wilhelm was not convinced by these arguments, but he wavered. Laertes represented to him the improbability of the story, so evidently made up by Philine to amuse them, reminded him that both the hair and figure of the young officer were like Friedrich's, urged on him the great difficulty of overtaking them now that they had had a twelve hours' start, and, above all, the impossibility of Serlo's being able to do without both himself and Wilhelm on the stage that night.

All these reasons only succeeded in inducing Wilhelm at last to give up the idea of following Philine himself, and that very evening Laertes found a thoroughly suitable man to whom they could entrust the task. He was a steady person who had served in good families as guide and courier, and happened just then to be without occupation. They provided him with money and full information of the whole affair, commissioning him to

seek and overtake the fugitives; this done, not to lose sight of them, and to write to the two friends at once with full particulars. He started on horseback the same hour to pursue the equivocal couple, and Wilhelm felt in some measure calmed by having made this arrangement.

CHAPTER XVI.

PHILINE's departure produced no very striking sensation either among her theatrical companions or on the public. She was so seldom in earnest about what she did; the women, without exception, hated her, the men preferred a *tête-à-tête* with her to seeing her on the boards, and thus her fair, we might even say happy, talent for the theatre was thrown away. The remaining members of the company took all the more pains to supply her place; Madame Melina especially distinguished herself by diligence and attention. She observed and adopted, as formerly, Wilhelm's maxims, following his theories and his example, and had gained a certain something in her manner which made her more interesting than formerly. Her acting soon became correct, her tone in the conversations perfectly natural, and the same to a certain extent in those parts requiring feeling. She knew how to suit herself to Serlo's moods, studied singing in order to please him, and in this too soon made as much progress as was necessary for social entertainment.

The company was made more complete by the addition of some newly-arrived actors, and as Serlo and Wilhelm each worked in his own way, the latter insisting on the preservation of the broad general sense and tone of each piece, the former conscientiously working out all

the small details, the actors felt their influence and were aroused to a praiseworthy zeal, while the public took a lively interest in their proceedings.

"We are on a very good tack," said Serlo one day, "and if we go on as we are doing now, we shall soon carry the public with us. People may easily be misled by foolish and indecorous representations, but if you set before them what is sensible and proper, and do this in an interesting way, they will be sure to take hold of it.

"The great fault in our national theatre, and the reason why neither actors nor spectators can arrive at a proper consciousness of what they are doing and seeing, is this: there is far too much mixture and variety on our stage; there is no limit on which a judgment can be based. I cannot see that our having widened the German theatre into a kind of immeasurable field for the exhibition of entire nature is an advantage, and yet as things are at present neither managers nor actors can curtail their *répertoire*, unless indeed the national taste itself should subsequently point out the correct boundary. Good society can only exist under certain conditions, and it is the same with a good theatre; certain manners and modes of speech, certain subjects and modes of behaviour must be excluded. No one is the poorer for diminishing his household expenditure."

On these matters they were of various opinions. Wilhelm and the majority were for the English drama; Serlo and a few for the French.

They agreed, in idle hours, of which unfortunately an actor has so many, to meet and go through the best plays in both languages, noting what was best and most worthy of imitation in each; they made a beginning with some French plays. Aurelia each time left the room as

soon as the reading had begun. At first they thought she could not be well, but it struck Wilhelm as strange, and he asked her the reason.

"I never mean to be present at such a reading," she said. "How can I listen and criticise when my heart is torn to pieces? I hate the French language with my whole soul."

["How can any one hate a language to which he owes the principal part of his cultivation?" cried Wilhelm, "and to which we Germans shall have to owe a great deal more, if we are ever to get into shape?"]

"It is not prejudice on my part," replied Aurelia. "A miserable impression—a hateful recollection connected with my faithless friend—has deprived me of all pleasure in this refined and beautiful language. And now I hate it with my whole heart. So long as our friendship lasted he wrote in German, and such cordial, genuine, powerful German! But when he wanted to get rid of me he began to write in French, a thing which had only happened as an occasional joke before. I saw and felt what was intended. By that means he could with a calm conscience write what he would have blushed to say in his mother-tongue. Oh! it is a wonderful language for reservations, equivocations and lies; it is a *perfidious* language. There is, thank God, no word in German that can express *perfidious* in its full extent. Our poor *treulos** is an innocent child in comparison. *Perfidy* triumphs in its faithlessness and enjoys it. That nation may well be envied for a cultivation that can express such refined shades of meaning in one word. Yes! French is the right language for the world; it is worthy of being universal, for in that language men can deceive and cheat each other to their hearts' content. His

* Faithless.

French letters read fairly enough; if you chose, you might fancy them warm and even passionate, but looked at closely, they were mere phrases, execrable phrases! He has taken away all my pleasure in the French language and literature, even in the beautiful and precious sayings of its noblest spirits. I shudder now whenever I hear a French word."

In this way she would go on for hours, venting her anger and interrupting or spoiling every other conversation. Sooner or later Serlo would put an end to her moody talk by a few bitter words, but the conversation was generally spoilt for that evening.

It is sad, but true, that everything which has to be accomplished by the union of a greater or less number of human beings and circumstances, cannot maintain itself in perfection for any length of time. Of a company of players no less than of a kingdom—of a circle of friends no less than of an army—the moment may generally be safely pointed out when it is at the zenith of its perfection, its unity, its contentment and activity. But some change suddenly takes place in the individuals of which the body is composed, new members are added, either the circumstances cease to suit the characters, or the characters become less adapted to the circumstances, and what was formerly allied and associated falls asunder. It might be said that during a certain period Serlo's company was as perfect as a German company has ever been able to boast of being. Most of the actors were in the right place, every one had plenty to do and did it with a will. Their private circumstances were very fair, and each member seemed to promise well for the future in his art, because each had taken the first steps in a mettlesome, brisk fashion. It now appeared however that a portion of the number were mere automatons,

incapable of reaching any further point than can be attained without the possession of feeling, and soon those evil passions interfered which usually stand in the way of every well-meant plan, and rend asunder with the greatest ease what sensible and rightly-thinking persons are endeavouring to keep together.

Philine's departure proved not quite so unimportant as had at first been believed. She had been very clever at amusing Serlo, and knew how to rouse and animate the others more or less. She had borne Aurelia's temper with great patience, and the especial business of her life had been to flatter Wilhelm. In this way she had been a kind of cementing bond between them all, and her loss soon made itself felt.

Serlo could not live without some little love-affair. Elmira, who had grown up and, one might even say, become beautiful in a short time, had already excited his admiration, and Philine was clever enough to foster this feeling. "We must learn betimes to be match-makers," she would say; "there's nothing else left for us when we are old."

By this means Serlo and Elmira had become very intimate with each other; this intimacy increased after Philine's departure, and their little romance was all the more interesting because they had to hide it carefully from Elmira's father, who would have treated any irregularities of this description in the most serious manner. Her sister however was in the secret, and Serlo was in consequence obliged to be very indulgent to the two girls. One of their worst habits was an immoderate love of eating, we might even say an insufferable greediness, a point in which they contrasted most unfavourably with Philine, who really added to her other charms by seem-

ing to live on air, and merely sipping the froth from a glass of champagne in the most graceful fashion.

But if Serlo wished to please his fair lady he was obliged to prolong breakfast until it touched the dinner-hour, and eke out the time till supper with some afternoon refreshment. He had a plan in his head too at this time, the possible success or failure of which disturbed him. He fancied namely, that he had discovered an attachment between Wilhelm and Aurelia, and wished that this might prove to be the case. The whole mechanical work of the theatre he hoped in that case to be able to throw on Wilhelm's shoulders, and to find in him, as in his first brother-in-law, a faithful and industrious tool. The greater part of the managing business he had already by imperceptible degrees transferred to him, Aurelia had charge of the money matters, and Serlo did what he liked as in the old days. But there existed a secret source of vexation both for himself and for his sister.

The world has a strange way of behaving towards public characters of acknowledged merit; it begins by degrees to show them indifference and to favour some newly-risen, though far inferior, talent; its demands on the former are excessive, while from the latter it will put up with almost anything.

Serlo and Aurelia had abundant opportunity now to animadvert on this propensity. The new arrivals, and more especially those among them who were young and good-looking, absorbed all the public attention and applause, while the brother and sister were for the most part obliged to make their exits, even after the most earnest efforts, unaccompanied by the welcome sound of a clapping audience. It must be said however that there were one or two reasons for this. Aurelia's pride was

most conspicuous, and her contempt for the public was known to many. Serlo, to be sure, flattered every one singly to their faces, but his cutting speeches about them collectively were often repeated and carried round from one to another. Then too the new members of the company were some of them strangers and new to the public, others young, agreeable and standing in need of assistance—reasons which soon enough supplied them with well-wishers and patrons.

Beside these outward troubles, discontent and disturbances arose within their own body. No sooner was it discovered that Wilhelm had undertaken the business duties belonging to the management, than most of the actors began to behave badly, just because he, in his usual way, wished to introduce more order and accuracy into the whole, and especially insisted on the punctual and regular performance of every mechanical duty.

In a short time the condition of things, which till now had been almost ideal, degenerated into something as common and vulgar as could have been found in any band of strolling players. And sad to say, no sooner had Wilhelm, by painstaking diligence and effort, succeeded in making himself acquainted with every thing requisite for this calling, and trained both himself and his habits for it, than he began in gloomy hours to feel that such a trade deserved the necessary outlay of time and strength less than any other. The work was burdensome and the reward small. He would have preferred a calling in which after labour there is time for mental rest, to this, in which after the day's mechanical drudgery had been gone through, the goal towards which he was striving could only be reached by further and intenser efforts of mind and feeling. He had to listen to Aurelia's complaints of her brother's extravagance, and to appear not

to understand Serlo's distant hints bearing on the wished-for marriage with his sister. At the same time he had to hide the deepest and heaviest of his griefs: namely, that the messenger sent after the equivocal officer had neither returned nor written, and therefore our friend had reason to fear he had lost his Mariana for the second time.

A general mourning occurring just then, the theatre was closed for some weeks, and Wilhelm seized this opportunity to visit the clergyman with whom the old harper had been placed. He found him living in a pleasant part of the country, and the first thing that met his eye in the parsonage was the old man teaching a boy to play on his own instrument. He shewed much pleasure at seeing Wilhelm, rose, gave him his hand and said: "You see I am still of some little use in the world; allow me to continue my lessons, as the hours are portioned out."

The clergyman received Wilhelm in the most friendly way, told him that things were looking very promising with the old man and that they had hopes of his perfect recovery.

Their conversation naturally turned on the methods of curing madness.

"If we except the physical difficulties, which are often insurmountable, and in which I call in the assistance of a thoughtful physician," said the clergyman, "the means of curing insanity seem to me very simple; they are the same by which we should prevent healthy people from going mad. Rouse them to activity, accustom them to regularity and order; make them see that they share their existence and fate in common with so many others; that the most marvellous talent, the most brilliant good-fortune and the deepest disasters, are nothing more than

small deviations from the ordinary course of nature; in this way madness will be prevented from creeping in, and if already there, will disappear by degrees. I have divided the old man's time; he gives some children lessons on the harp, helps me in the garden, and is already much more cheerful. He looks forward to eating the cabbages he plants, and teaches my son most diligently to play the harp, in order that the boy, to whom he has promised the instrument at his death, may be able to use it. In my character of clergyman I say but little to him about his strange scruples; but an active life brings many occurrences with it, and he will soon be led to feel that every kind of doubt can only be removed by activity. I go gently to work, but when I can get rid of his beard and cowl I shall have gained a great point, for nothing leads more directly to madness than the distinguishing of ourselves from others, and nothing is a greater preservative to common sense than a life among the multitude and without any special distinctions from them as to the way of living. Alas! how much in our education, and in the regulations and institutions of our middle-class life, tends to prepare us and our children for insanity!"

Wilhelm stayed some days with this sensible man and heard a number of most interesting stories, not referring only to mad people, but to others usually looked upon as clever and even wise, and yet whose eccentricities border on madness.

The conversation however became three times as animated on the appearance of the doctor, who was in the frequent habit of visiting his friend the clergyman and helping in his benevolent efforts. He was an elderly man and had never been strong, yet he passed his life in the noblest duties. He loved the country and could

hardly exist otherwise than in the open air; at the same time he was sociable and active, and for many years had taken an especial fancy for making friends of all the country parsons round. Those whom he found already given to some useful occupation he assisted by every means in his power; the undecided he persuaded to adopt some hobby or other, and as he was connected more or less with the nobility, gentry, land-stewards, and magistrates he had been able during twenty years to do a great deal in a quiet way for the improvement of many branches of agriculture, and to set in motion whatever might benefit the soil, animals or human beings, thus furthering the truest kind of enlightenment. [“Only one thing,” he said, “can be looked upon as a real misfortune for man; and that is, when he becomes possessed of some fixed idea which either can exert no influence on active life or withdraws him from it.”]

“At the present time,” he continued, “I have just such a case, in which as yet all my skill has failed to be of any use. They are rich people in high life; the affair lies almost in your line, Herr Pastor, and I am sure our young friend here will not repeat it further.

“In the absence of this nobleman a joke which we cannot consider justifiable was planned: A young man was dressed up in his clothes in order to deceive his lady, and I much fear, though the story was told me as a piece of fun, that the real intention was to lead this noble, amiable and charming woman from the right way. Her husband returned unexpectedly, and on coming into his room saw what he believed to be his own apparition; from that time he fell into a deep melancholy, in which he believes, and nourishes the belief, that he shall soon die.

“He resigns himself to people who flatter him with

religious notions, and I do not see how we are to prevent him from going over to the Moravians with his wife, and leaving the greater part of his property, as he has no children, away from his relations."

"With his wife?" cried Wilhelm passionately, after listening in terror to this story.

"And sad to say," the doctor continued, attributing Wilhelm's exclamation to nothing deeper than a benevolent interest, "this poor lady is suffering from a still deeper sorrow, which renders a separation from the world not so distasteful to her. When the same young man came to take leave of her she imprudently allowed a rising affection for him to appear; he took courage, clasped her in his arms, and in doing so pressed the portrait of her husband, set in diamonds, with some force against her breast. She felt a sharp pain; this went off, leaving at first a small red mark, and then no trace at all. Speaking as a man, I am convinced she has nothing further to reproach herself with, and as a physician, I am equally certain that the pressure will have no further evil consequences; but she believes that the part is hardening, no one can persuade her to the contrary, and if you try to convince her of her error by the evidence of feeling, she assures you that that is only momentary; she has persuaded herself that it must end in cancer, and thus this young and lovely creature is becoming totally lost both to herself and to the world."

"Miserable wretch that I am!" cried Wilhelm striking his forehead, and dashing out of the house into the fields. He had never felt in such a fearful condition before.

The doctor and the clergyman were very much surprised at this discovery, and in the evening, when he returned and gave them a more detailed account of

the whole affair accusing himself in the bitterest manner, they had enough to do with him. Both felt the greatest sympathy, especially as in his present depressed frame of mind he described his circumstances even irrespective of this in the darkest colours.

The doctor did not need much persuasion to give Wilhelm his company into the town the next day, and to do his best for Aurelia whom her friend had left the day before in a precarious state.

They found her worse than they had expected. She was suffering from a kind of intermittent fever, which was all the more difficult to reach because she made a principle of fomenting and aggravating the attacks. The stranger was presented to her as a physician; he behaved with much prudence and politeness, her condition both of body and mind was talked over, and the new acquaintance brought forward several instances of persons who, even with such a complaint as the one under which she was labouring, had lived to a great age; adding however, that in such cases nothing was more injurious than a determined revival of such passionate feelings. He took especial pains not to conceal his belief, that those persons were to be deemed especially happy who, on finding that their tendency to disease could not be entirely removed, had embraced and cherished sincere and genuine religious opinions. This observation he made in a quiet, unpretending way, almost as if speaking of an historical fact, and he promised his new friends some interesting reading, in the shape of a manuscript received from a female friend now dead, whom he had valued very highly.

"To me," he said, "it is unspeakably precious; still I will trust you with the original. Nothing but the title is

from my own hand; it is called: The confessions of a beautiful soul."

As to the diet and medical treatment necessary for the unfortunate Aurelia in her excited overstrained condition, the physician gave Wilhelm his best advice, promising to write and if possible to visit her again.

Meanwhile a great change had been taking place in Wilhelm's absence. During the period of his rule as manager of the business affairs, he had acted with a certain freedom and liberality, kept the main point more especially in view, and provided everything well and handsomely, especially as regarded costumes, decorations and other requisites. As he could not influence the actors by high motives, he had coaxed them into good humour through their self-interest, and had felt justified in doing this, because Serlo had never made any pretensions to economy, was fond of hearing his theatre praised for its splendour, and was quite satisfied, if Aurelia, after deducting the expenses, could tell him that there were no debts, and afford besides the sums necessary for defraying those which he might have incurred by extraordinary generosity to the fair Elmira or in other ways.

Melina meanwhile, who had the charge of the wardrobe, had been watching matters in his own quiet wily fashion, and took the opportunity of Wilhelm's absence and Aurelia's illness, to infuse into Serlo's mind a feeling that in reality it was possible so to increase receipts and diminish expenses, that either more money might be laid by or more pleasure indulged in. Serlo listened and was pleased; Melina ventured to bring forward his plan.

"I do not mean to say," he began, "that any of your actors are too highly paid at present; they are deserving fellows and would be welcome anywhere; but in pro-

portion to the money they bring in they certainly receive too much. My proposition is that we start an opera; as far as the theatre is concerned, I feel compelled to say that you are the man to keep up an entire theatre alone. Are not you at the present time experiencing that your merits are not appreciated? and that, not because your fellow-actors are first-rate; it is simply because they are good that people have ceased to do justice to your own remarkable talents.

“Now take your place alone there, as has probably often been the case; look out some average or even inferior actors at low wages, drill them well in all the merely mechanical parts, as no one knows better how to do than yourself, employ your remaining means for the opera, and you will find that with the same amount of trouble and expense, you give more satisfaction and take unquestionably more money than at present.”

Serlo felt too much flattered to start many objections. He acknowledged to Melina that his fondness for music had often led him to wish for something of the kind; but at the same time he could not help seeing that this plan would still further mislead the public taste, and that under the influence of a mixed thing such as Melina proposed—neither opera nor theatre—any remains of taste for a decided and entire work of art would necessarily disappear.

In answer to this, Melina, not in the most refined style, began to make game of Wilhelm's pedantic ideals of this kind, to laugh at his presumption in wishing to form the public instead of to be formed by them, and the two united in convincing themselves to their perfect satisfaction, that the great thing was to make money and live in pleasure, hardly concealing that their nearest wish was to get rid of those persons who stood

in the way of their plan. Melina, for instance, spoke with regret of Aurelia's illness and the difficulty of prolonging her life, meaning the opposite in his heart. Serlo pretended to be sorry that Wilhelm did not sing, intimating by these very words that he considered they could soon do without him. Melina produced a long list of economies that might be made, and Serlo beheld in him a threefold substitute for his first brother-in-law. Their feeling that this first interview must be kept secret, bound them more closely together, and they took opportunities of discussing everything that happened, disapproving of whatever was undertaken by Wilhelm and Aurelia, and working out their own project in thought more and more.

Circumspect as they were with regard to their plan, little as they betrayed themselves by word, they were not politic enough to banish all signs of feeling from their behaviour. Melina opposed and counteracted Wilhelm in many cases that lay within his domain, and Serlo, who had never shown any forbearance or indulgence to his sister, grew harsher and more unkind as her illness increased, and her changeable passionate moods required more consideration and tenderness.

Just at this time they proposed giving *Emilie Galotti*. The cast was very good and in the narrow limits of this tragedy each of the actors had full scope for displaying his varied powers. Serlo, as Marinelli, was quite in his place; Odoardo was very well given; Madame Melina acted the mother very intelligently; Elmira distinguished herself as Emilie; Laertes made a dignified Appiani, and Wilhelm had given some months to the study of the Prince's character. This study had given occasion to the frequent consideration alone, and discussion with Serlo and Aurelia, of the questions: Wherein does a

noble manner differ from a well-bred one? To what extent is the former indispensable to the latter and the latter not necessary to the former?

[Serlo, whose part of Marinelli represented the courtier as he is, without caricature, gave some very good thoughts on the subject. "Real good-breeding," he said, "is very difficult to imitate, partly because it is in reality only negative, and partly because it presupposes long practice. We must not fancy that it is necessary to advertise dignity by a certain something in our behaviour; in that way we easily fall into a formal proud manner; we must rather avoid everything that is undignified and vulgar. A well-bred man will never forget himself or others, will do nothing that can compromise his own dignity, will neither be officious nor impolite, show no signs of outward agitation or emotion, never be in a hurry, and will so understand how to control himself at every moment, that let the storm within him rage as it will his outward equilibrium remains undisturbed. A noble man may possibly be negligent of himself at times, a well-bred man never. The latter may be compared to a carefully dressed person, who takes care not to lean against anything, and whom every one else is careful not to brush up against; he is distinguished from the rest, but still he ought not to stand alone, for it is in this art as in every other: what is most difficult must at last be accomplished with ease, and the well-bred man—notwithstanding all that separates him from others—ought always to appear in connexion with them; never stiff or formal, ready and skilful on all occasions, appearing always as the first and yet never obtruding himself as such.]

"This being the case, it is clear that in order to seem well-bred, a man must be so; it is easy to see too why women, generally speaking, learn to adopt a well-bred

manner so much more easily than men, and why soldiers and courtiers acquire it sooner than others."

On hearing this, Wilhelm almost despaired of being able to give his part, but Serlo restored his courage by going into every detail with him, making such refined observations on each point, and so thoroughly providing him with all he required, that at least in the eyes of the multitude the prince made a very fine gentleman indeed.

Serlo had promised to give him the benefit of whatever remarks he might still have to make on his performance, after it was over; but the possibility of any such critical conversation was prevented by an unpleasant dispute between the brother and sister. Aurelia had played the part of Orsina as probably no one will ever play it again. She knew it thoroughly and at the rehearsals had treated it with indifference, but on the stage it might be said that she opened all the sluices of her own personal grief, and the result was a representation such as no poet even in the first fire of his invention could have figured to himself. Immense applause rewarded her painful effort, but on going to look for her afterwards, she had fallen half fainting into a chair.

Serlo had already shown his annoyance at what he called her exaggerated acting, and at this exposure of her innermost feelings before a public all more or less acquainted with that odious story, and as usual when he was very angry had manifested his wrath by stamping on the ground and gnashing his teeth; now that he saw her fallen back on her chair and surrounded by the others, he burst out: "Leave her alone! she'll go perfectly naked on the stage next, and then there'll be applause enough."

"Ungrateful, inhuman creature!" she exclaimed. "I shall soon be carried naked to that place where no applause

can ever reach our ears again." As she said these words she sprang up and hurried to the door. The servant had forgotten to bring her cloak, the sedan-chair was not there, it had rained and a cold raw wind was blowing up the street. She was overheated and they begged her not to go out—in vain; she walked slowly on purpose, praising the fresh cool air and inhaling it greedily. But by the time she reached home she was so hoarse that she could hardly speak, and would not confess that she felt perfectly stiff down her back and neck. Before long her tongue became so paralysed that she could not speak correctly; they put her to bed and by the use of effectual remedies, one symptom at a time would give way, but only to be replaced by another. The fever gathered strength and she was in danger.

The next morning she had a quiet hour, sent for Wilhelm and put a letter into his hands. "That paper," she said, "has long been waiting for the present moment. I feel that my life is drawing to its close, promise me to deliver it yourself, and to say a few words that will revenge my sufferings on that faithless man; he is not without feeling and the tidings of my death shall cause him at least a momentary pain."

Wilhelm took the letter, but tried at the same time to comfort her and to put away the thought of death.

"No," she said, "do not try to take away my nearest hope. I have expected ~~him~~ long and shall embrace ~~him~~ gladly."

Soon after this the physician's promised manuscript arrived. She begged Wilhelm to read it aloud to her; and the reader will best be able to judge of the effect it produced on her mind when he has made himself acquainted with the following book. Our poor friend's passion and perversity seemed suddenly softened, she

asked for her letter back, and wrote another, apparently in a much gentler tone, begging Wilhelm, if he should find that her friend was distressed at the tidings of her death, to comfort him, and assure him that she had forgiven and had wished him well.

From this time she was very quiet, and seemed to be thinking over and trying to become thoroughly familiar with a few ideas gained from the manuscript, out of which she made Wilhelm read to her from time to time. The gradual decay of her strength was not apparent, and on coming to pay her a visit one morning Wilhelm was surprised to find her dead.

The respect he had felt for her and the habit of being so constantly in her society made her loss very painful to him. She had been in fact his only real friend, and he had felt Serlo's coldness only too much of late. He therefore felt eager to perform the commission she had given him and to leave them for a time.

On the other hand this journey was just what Melina wanted, for by means of his extensive correspondence he had just entered into an agreement with two singers, a man and a woman, who were to prepare the public for the coming opera by interludes between the acts.

Aurelia's death and Wilhelm's absence were to be made good at first by this means, and our friend was satisfied with anything that procured him more easily leave of absence for a few weeks.

The mission given him by Aurelia had assumed a strange importance in his mind. Her early death had touched him deeply, and made him feel as if the man who had not only shortened her life, but filled that short period with anguish, must be his enemy.

Notwithstanding her last gentle words therefore, he

resolved that on delivering the letter he would pass a severe sentence on her faithless friend; and, not willing to trust to the feeling of the moment, prepared a speech which as he went on with it, became more pathetic than just. After having completely convinced himself that his composition was well put together, he proceeded to learn it by heart, making preparations meanwhile for his journey. Mignon was in the room while he packed up his things, and she asked if he was going to travel northward or southward; on hearing the former she answered: "Then I will wait for you here." She begged him to give her Mariana's string of beads; he could not refuse the dear little creature; the neck-handkerchief she had already. In return she put the ghost's veil into his port-manteau, though he told her that such a piece of gauze could be of no use to him.

Melina undertook the management of the theatrical business, and his wife promised to cast a motherly eye on the two children from whom Wilhelm parted most unwillingly. Felix was in high spirits when he said farewell, and on their asking what he would like Wilhelm to bring him, said: "Listen, I should like you to bring me a father." Mignon took Wilhelm's hand, raised herself on tiptoe and gave him a warm simple and open, but not tender, kiss on his lips, saying as she did so: "Master do not forget us, and come back soon."

And thus we leave our friend to start on his journey, accompanied by a thousand varied thoughts and feelings. In conclusion we will note down here a song, which Mignon had recited several times with much feeling, but which owing to the throng of strange events we have hitherto been hindered from giving our readers.

" Help me to silence, for to speak were sin,
And silence is my duty now ;
I long to tell thee all that's hid within,
But Fate will not allow.

" At his true hour the glorious sun we see
Chase the dark night, and it must turn to day ;
E'en rugged rocks will set their waters free
The thirst of earth and mankind to allay.

" When pain and sorrow come, each seeks his friend
And tells him all the woe I'd tell to thee ;
But my poor lips a solemn oath doth bind,
And none but God may dare pronounce them free."

BOOK VI.

THE CONFESSIONS OF A BEAUTIFUL SOUL.

UP to my eighth year I was a healthy child, but I can remember as little of that time as of the day on which I was born. In the early part of that year I broke a blood-vessel, and from that moment my soul was all feeling and memory. The smallest details of that event stand as clearly before my eyes as if it had happened only yesterday.

It seems to me now that during that nine-months' illness the foundation for my entire future mode of thought was laid; and that, by means of the assistance which was then offered to my mind in developing itself after its own fashion.

I suffered and loved; that was in fact the form and fashion of my heart. During the most violent attacks of coughing and wasting fever, I was as quiet as a snail who has drawn back into his shell; as soon as I could get a little breath I longed to feel something pleasant, and as every other enjoyment was denied me, tried to indemnify myself through my eyes and ears. They brought me dolls and picture-books, and whoever wished to sit at my bedside was obliged to tell me something.

I enjoyed hearing my mother's Bible stories; my father amused me with natural objects. He had a very fair collection; and would bring one drawer down after another, from time to time, to show me their contents and explain them to me correctly. Dried plants and insects,

different kinds of anatomical preparations, human skin and bones, mummies and other things of the same kind were laid on the little one's bed; the game he brought home was shown to me before it was taken into the kitchen; and—that the Prince of this world might not be entirely unrepresented in this assembly—my aunt used to tell me love-stories and fairy-tales. I took all in, and everything took root. Sometimes I spent hours in communion with the unseen Being, and I can still remember some verses that my mother wrote down at my dictation.

I often repeated again to my father what I had learnt from him, and it was not easy to make me take a medicine until I had asked where the things grew of which it was made, how they looked and what they were called. Neither did my aunt's stories fall on stony ground. I imagined myself dressed in beautiful raiment and encountering the most delightful princes, who could take no rest until they had discovered the name of the unknown beauty. I carried on one adventure of this kind—in which a charming little angel in a white robe with golden wings gave himself a great deal of trouble to win me—so long, that at last I almost seemed to see a vision of him.

At the end of a year I was tolerably restored to health, but the wild spirits of childhood were quite gone. I could not even play with my dolls; I wanted beings who could return my love. My father kept all kinds of dogs, cats and birds, in all which I took great delight, but what would I not have given to possess a creature that played a most important part in one of my aunt's fairy tales! It was a lamb caught in a wood, fed and brought up by a peasant girl; but in this pretty creature dwelt an enchanted prince, who appeared at last in the

form of a handsome youth and rewarded his benefactress with his hand. How I longed for such a lamb!

As there was no such creature however to be found, and everything round me pursued its natural course, the hope of ever possessing so rare a treasure almost entirely vanished by degrees. I comforted myself by reading books in which marvellous events were described. The *Christian German Hercules* was my favourite; that devout love-story was quite to my taste. Whatever happened to his Valiska—and awful things befell her—he always prayed before going to her help, and his prayers were all put down in the book, word for word. That pleased me thoroughly. That love for the invisible which I had always vaguely felt was increased by this; I determined once for all that God should be my confidant too.

As I grew older I went on reading a mass of books, Heaven only knows what; but the *Roman Octavia* carried off the prize from all the rest. The persecutions of the early Christians, clothed in the form of a novel, excited my liveliest interest.

At last however my mother began to find fault with this constant reading; in order to please her, my father would take away my books one day, but only to give them me back the next, and as she was clever enough to see that nothing she could do in the matter would be of any use, she contented herself with insisting that at least I should give as much time to the Bible as to other reading. I needed little persuasion to do this, and read the sacred books with great interest. At the same time my mother was very careful that nothing of a bad tendency should come into my hands; indeed I should have put away any improper book at once of my own accord, for my princes and princesses were all extremely virtuous, besides which I knew more of the natural

history of our race than I allowed any one to perceive. Most of this I had gained from the Bible. I compared doubtful passages with words and things that came before my own eyes, and so, with the help of my own 'desire for information, and my talent for combination, succeeded in finding out the truth. If I had heard of witches, I should have wanted to know all about witchcraft too.

That with this passionate fondness for reading I still learnt how to cook, is owing to my mother's care and to the desire for information spoken of above: in cooking there was something to be seen. The cutting-up of a fowl or a young porker was a treat for me. I used to carry the intestines to my father, and he would talk to me about them as if I had been a medical student. With evident inward pleasure he would often say that the making of a son had been spoiled in me.

I had now passed my twelfth year. I learnt French, dancing and drawing, and took the usual lessons in religion. These last stirred in me various thoughts and feelings, but none that had any immediate reference to my own condition. I liked to hear God spoken of, and was proud of being better able to speak of Him myself than most of my companions; indeed I began to read a number of books which enabled me to talk about religion, but it never occurred to me to think over the real state of my soul, and to ask whether it was like a mirror that could reflect the beams of the eternal sun; this I had once for all taken for granted.

I learnt French with great delight and had a very good and thorough master. He was neither a thoughtless empiric, nor a dry dull grammarian; he was a scholar and had seen the world; and while giving me lessons in French satisfied my desire for information in many different ways. I loved him so much that my heart always

beat when I was expecting his coming. Neither had I any difficulty in learning drawing, and if my master had possessed any head and any information I should have made more progress; unfortunately he had only hands and practice.

Dancing gave me at first the least pleasure of all my lessons. My body was too sensitive, and my sisters were my only companions in learning. Our dancing-master's idea however of giving a ball to all his pupils gave a fresh charm to the old practice.

Among the throng of boys and girls at this ball the two sons of the Lord Chamberlain were the most conspicuous. The youngest was my own age, the eldest two years older, and so beautiful were both that it was universally admitted such children had never been seen before. I too, from the moment I noticed them, could look at no one else. From that moment I paid attention to my dancing—I wished to dance well. But how did it come to pass that these two boys took especial notice of me among so many other children? I cannot tell; suffice it to say that in an hour we were the best friends, and before our little evening's entertainment was over had agreed on our next place of meeting. This was a great joy to me, but the next morning, when two polite little notes from the two brothers enquiring after my health—each accompanied by a bouquet—were brought me, I was in ecstasies. I have never felt since as I felt then. Politenesses were responded to and notes exchanged. The church and the promenade became our places of meeting. Our young acquaintances always invited us together, but we were cunning enough so to hide the matter from our parents, that they should discover no more than we chose.

So now I had at once two lovers. I was not decided

for either beyond the other; I liked them both and we were very happy together. Suddenly the eldest fell ill. I had been so often ill myself, that I knew of many little comforts and delicacies particularly suitable for an invalid, and sent them to him. His parents were grateful for this attention, listened to their beloved son's request, and as soon as he was able to leave his bed invited me and my sisters to see him. In his tenderly affectionate way of receiving me there was no remnant of childishness, and from that day my mind was made up for him. He warned me at once to keep this secret from his brother, but the warmth of my affection was not to be hidden, and the jealousy of the youngest made our romance perfect. He played us a thousand tricks, delighted in marring our pleasure, and by this means only increased the passionate affection he was trying to destroy.

So at last I had really found my long wished-for lamb, and this strong love took the same effect on me as an illness; it quieted me and held me back from all extravagant, exciting pleasures. I was much alone and my heart was touched; I began to think of God again. He was still my confidant, and I remember well with what tears I used to pray for the sick boy whose health continued so very delicate.

Childish as many points in this little occurrence may have been, it contributed to form and cultivate my heart. For our French master we had to write a letter of our own invention every day, instead of the usual translation exercise. I turned my own love-story to account, under the names of Phyllis and Damon. The old man soon saw through it, and in order to make me open my heart to him, praised the composition very warmly. I grew bolder by degrees, made a frank avowal and was

true even in the smallest details. I do not now remember at what point, but in the course of my story he said to me: "That is very pretty and natural, but Phyllis must take care; the matter may soon grow serious."

I was annoyed that he did not look upon it as such already, and asked him in my vexation what he understood by serious. He did not wait to be asked twice, but explained himself so clearly that I could hardly hide my terror. As my next feeling however was annoyance that he could entertain such thoughts, I conquered my fear, and, in my wish to defend my heroine, said with burning cheeks: "But, sir, Phyllis is an honest girl."

Then he was malicious enough to laugh at me about my honest heroine; and, as we spoke in French, to play upon the word "*honnête*" and put the honesty of my Phyllis through all its significations; I felt the absurdity and grew extremely embarrassed. He, not wishing to frighten me, turned the conversation, but only for a time; many a little play or story that I read and translated with him serving as opportunity to bring back the subject, and to point out how weak a protection so-called virtue can prove against the summons of a violent affection. I left off arguing with him, but in my heart was always vexed, and his remarks became a burden to me.

By degrees my connexion with Damon ceased altogether; the tricks and artifices of the younger brother broke up our friendship. Not long after, both these beautiful youths died. I was grieved at the time, but soon forgot them.

Phyllis grew tall and healthy and began to see the world. Our crown-prince married, and soon after, at the death of his father, succeeded to the government. Both at court and in the town, every thing was full of life and

movement. My curiosity was well supplied with food. There were plays, balls and their usual adjuncts, and though my parents kept us back from such things as much as possible, we were obliged to show ourselves at court, where I had been presented. Strangers streamed into the town, every house had its distinguished visitors, some gentlemen were recommended to us too, and others introduced; and at my uncle's every nation was represented.

My well-meaning Mentor continued modestly but pertinently to warn me, and I in my heart always to feel offended at his warnings. I was not in the least convinced of the truth of his assertions; perhaps indeed at that time I was really in the right, and he was wrong to think that women were always, and under every circumstance, so weak; but he spoke so earnestly that once I grew seriously afraid lest it should be as he said, and answered eagerly: "As the danger is so great and the human heart so weak, I will ask God to protect me."

This simple, earnest answer seemed to please him and he approved my resolution; but seldom was anything less earnestly meant. This time it was only an empty sentence: my former impressions of the Invisible were almost entirely extinguished. The throng by which I was surrounded distracted my thoughts and carried me away in its own course, like a mighty river. Those were the emptiest years of my life. To spend days in talking of nothing; never to have a sound, healthy thought; to pass my time in dreams and fancies—that was what pleased me then. I never even spent a thought on my beloved books. I was surrounded by people who did not possess the smallest amount of knowledge or idea of science—German courtiers, a class in those days totally devoid of culture.

One would fancy that intercourse with such society must have brought me to the very verge of ruin. I passed my life in amusements which only appealed to the senses; never reflected, never prayed, never thought about myself nor about God; but I look upon it as a leading of Providence that none of those handsome rich, well-dressed men took my fancy. They were dissolute, and took no pains to hide it: this frightened and repelled me. They ornamented their conversation with ambiguous, equivocal expressions, and I grew cold to them. Their impertinence at times exceeded all belief; and I allowed myself to be rude in my turn.

In addition to this my old master had once told me in confidence such things about the life of these bad men that I grew afraid even of their approaching me, and avoided everything they had touched, used or come in contact with.

Conspicuous among the strangers who were staying among us, was a young man to whom in joke we had given the name of Narcissus. He had gained some reputation already in his diplomatic career, and had come to our court in hopes that amid the various alterations then being made, he might meet with some advantageous post. He soon made the acquaintance of my father; his knowledge and conduct also procured him admission into a select circle of first-rate men. My father often spoke in his praise, and his handsome person would have made a deeper impression if there had not been a certain air of self-complacency running through all he did and said. I had seen him and thought well of him, but we had never yet spoken to each other.

At a large ball where we met we danced a minuet together, which did not however lead to any further intimacy. When the quicker and more fatiguing dances

began, which, to please my father who was concerned for my health I was accustomed to avoid, I went into another room and amused myself with some elderly lady friends who had sat down to cards.

Narcissus, after flying round with the rest for a time, came into this room too and, when he had recovered from a fit of bleeding at the nose brought on by the dancing, began a conversation on various subjects with me. In the course of half an hour the conversation grew so interesting, though totally unmixed with flattery or tender expressions of any kind, that we neither of us cared to dance any more. The others soon began to laugh at us for this, but we were not to be put out of countenance, and the next evening were able to continue our conversation, while at the same time the quiet was very beneficial to our health.

The acquaintance was made. Narcissus called on me and my sisters, and now once more I began to be aware what knowledge I possessed, what I had felt and reflected on, and on what subjects I could express myself in conversation. My new acquaintance, who had always lived in the best society, possessed, in addition to a thorough knowledge of all that fell under the head of politics or history, very extended literary information, and was acquainted with all the newest books, especially those published in France. Many a pleasant and useful book did he bring or send me, but this had to be kept as secret as a forbidden love. Learned women had already been turned into ridicule and even the well-informed were disliked, probably because it was thought impolite to put so many ignorant men to the blush. Even my father, though he thought this a most favourable opportunity for cultivating my mind, insisted on our literary transactions being kept secret.

Our acquaintance went on thus for nearly a year, and I could not say that Narcissus had ever used any expressions which savoured of love or tenderness. He was always polite and obliging, but showed no affection, and indeed seemed by no means indifferent to the charms of my youngest sister, who at that time was exceedingly beautiful. He spoke several foreign languages, the idioms and peculiar phrases of which he was fond of introducing into his German conversations, and he used to give her in joke many friendly pleasant foreign names. She did not return this in any especial manner; in truth she was drawn in another direction, and as she was very quick and he very sensitive, they often disagreed about trifles. He managed to keep on good terms with my mother and aunt, and so by degrees had become a member of the family.

Who knows how long we might have lived on in this way, if a strange chance had not suddenly altered our relations? I was invited with my sisters to a house which I was not fond of visiting. The society there was too miscellaneous, and one sometimes met people, if not of the coarsest, at all events of the dullest and most insipid stamp. This time Narcissus was invited too, and this gave me a reason for going, as I was sure to have at least one person with whom I could talk in my own way. A good deal that was very disagreeable occurred even at table, as some of the men had drunk deeply; and afterwards a game of forfeits was determined on. It was played with a great deal of animation and noise. Narcissus had to redeem a forfeit: he was to whisper something pleasant in every one's ear. Possibly he may have staid a little too long with my neighbour, the wife of a captain. Suddenly her husband gave him such a violent box on the ear that the powder flew into my

eyes. On looking up, after I had wiped them and recovered a little from the shock, I saw that both the men had their swords drawn. Narcissus was bleeding, and the rest of the company were trying to hold back the other, whom wine, anger and jealousy had almost deprived of his senses. I took Narcissus' arm, led him out of the door and upstairs into another room, where, fearing that he was not even there safe from his enraged adversary, I bolted the door.

We neither of us thought the wound was serious, as we could only see a cut across his hand, but we soon perceived that blood was streaming down his back and discovered a large wound on his head. Now I really felt anxious. I ran on to the landing to call for help, but could find no one: they were all busy below, trying to control the furious officer. At last one of the daughters of the family appeared, and frightened me even more by her unseasonable mirth: it was a confoundedly good comedy, she said: she should die with laughing at the noise they made. I begged her urgently to send for a surgeon; and in her wild way she rushed downstairs to fetch one herself.

I went back to the wounded man, bound my pocket-handkerchief round his hand, and a towel that I found hanging behind the door round his head. The wounds still bled profusely, he was very pale, and looked as if he were going to faint. Nobody was near to help me; I took him without ceremony in my arms, and tried to cheer him by caresses and kind words. This seemed to operate as a spiritual remedy; he retained his senses but sat there pale as death.

At last the busy mistress of the house came upstairs; she was terrified at discovering my friend lying in this condition in my arms and both of us covered with blood;

for no one had imagined that Narcissus was wounded; they all thought I had brought him off uninjured.

Wine, scents and all kinds of refreshing restoratives were brought at once in abundance, the surgeon arrived, and I could have been dispensed with; but Narcissus held my hand firmly; indeed I should have staid without being held. While his wounds were being dressed I continued to apply wine outwardly. I heeded little that the whole company were standing round us. The surgeon had finished, the wounded man took leave of me silently, but with a look of gratitude and obligation, and was carried home.

The mistress of the house then took me into her bedroom; she was obliged to undress me entirely, and I must confess, that as I caught sight of myself in the glass while they were washing the blood from my body, I became aware for the first time that I was beautiful even without the help of dress. As none of my own clothes were in a state to put on again, and every one in the house was either shorter or stouter than myself, I reached home in a very strange costume, to the great astonishment of my parents. On hearing of the shock I had received, their friend's wounds, the captain's folly, and indeed the whole affair, they were extremely distressed and annoyed. My father indeed was very nearly sending a challenge himself to the captain on the spot, in his eagerness to avenge his friend. He blamed the gentlemen who had been present for not having resented such a murderous attempt at once, as it was only too evident that directly after the blow the captain must have drawn his sword and wounded Narcissus from behind: the cut on the hand had not been given until after Narcissus had drawn his own sword. I was indescribably excited and affected, or had I not better say: the love which

was resting in the deepest recesses of my heart broke loose suddenly, like a flame to which the air has been let in? And though enjoyment and pleasure are very skilful in begetting love and nourishing it secretly, a woman of courageous temperament is most easily driven forward to decision and acknowledgment, by some sudden shock of fear. My parents gave their little daughter some medicine and sent her to bed; early the next morning my father hastened off to his friend, and found him lying in a violent fever brought on by his wounds.

He told me but little of what had passed between them, and tried to quiet my mind as to the consequences which might follow the affair. The questions being discussed were: whether it would be possible to accept an apology or whether the matter must come before a court of justice, and other points of a like nature. I knew my father too well to believe that he would like the affair to pass over without a duel, but I said nothing, having early learnt from him that women had no business with such disputes. It did not seem that anything touching myself had passed between the two friends, but it was not long before my father confided the purport of their further conversation to my mother. Narcissus, he said, had been deeply touched by what I had done to help him; had embraced him, declaring himself eternally indebted to me, and saying that he desired no happiness unless I could share it with him: he had also begged to be allowed to look on my father as his own. All this Mamma repeated to me faithfully, adding however the well-meant remark, that it was better not to lay too much importance on words uttered in first moments of strong feeling. "Of course not," I answered, with assumed coldness; but Heaven only knows what and how much I felt as I said so.

Narcissus was ill two months, and was prevented by the wound in his hand from even writing; he gave evidence however by the most polite attentions that he had not forgotten. I coupled all these extra politenesses with what my mother had told me and my head was perpetually full of fancies. The event served as entertainment for the whole town. To me people used a peculiar tone in speaking of it and drew inferences which, much as I tried to reject them, touched me very nearly. My inward agitation was all the more violent the more I tried to hide it from the world. The thought of losing him terrified me, and yet the possibility of a nearer connexion made me tremble. 'To a simple inexperienced girl there is certainly something alarming in the thought of marriage.'

These strong feelings brought me back to reflect on myself once more. The gay visions brought by a life of mere amusement, which had been floating before my eyes day and night, were all at once scattered to the winds. My soul began to stir within me again, but the much interrupted acquaintance with my invisible Friend could not be so easily restored. We continued at some distance from each other; something of the old state of feeling returned, but with a great difference.

A duel, in which the captain was seriously wounded, passed over entirely without my knowledge. Narcissus reappeared in society, and public opinion in every sense was in his favour. His first act was to have himself brought to our house with his head and hand still bound up. How my heart beat at that visit! The whole family was present, nothing beyond the usual speeches of thanks and politeness was said on either side, but he found an opportunity of shewing me some secret signs of tenderness which only increased my agitation. After his

recovery he visited us through the winter on the same footing as formerly, and though he gave me many quiet tokens of feeling and love, nothing was openly spoken on the subject.

In this way I was kept in constant practice. I could confide in no human creature and was at too great a distance from God. During the last four wild years I had forgotten Him; He came back to my mind now occasionally, but our acquaintance had grown cold; the visits I paid Him were only visits of ceremony, and as moreover I always dressed myself up on those occasions, and produced with self-complacency my virtue, the propriety of my conduct, and various other excellences in which I supposed myself superior to others, He seemed to take no notice whatever of me thus decked out.

A courtier, if treated thus by the prince on whom he depends for his success in life, would be much disturbed; but I was not at all uneasy. I had what I wanted, health and an easy comfortable life; if He were pleased to remember me, good; if not, I still believed I had done my duty.

I did not really think thus of myself then; but it was the true state of my soul. Even then however preparations were being made for changing and purifying my mind.

Spring arrived and Narcissus visited me one day unannounced and at a time when I was quite alone. He came as a lover and asked whether I would give him my heart, and, if he should obtain an honourable and lucrative post, my hand also at some future time.

He was already in the service of our government, but fearing his ambition, they had at first rather kept him back than rapidly promoted him, and as he possessed private property had given him but a small salary.

Much as I liked Narcissus, I knew he was not a man who could be dealt with in an entirely straightforward fashion, so I controlled my feelings and referred him to my father. Of his consent however he seemed to feel certain, and wished first to come to an agreement with me on the spot. At last I said yes, but only on condition that my parents were of the same mind. He then spoke to both of them in due form; they showed their satisfaction and we became engaged on the strength of what was hoped for speedily—his further promotion. Sisters and aunts were informed, but under injunctions of strictest secrecy.

¹ Thus my admirer was transformed into an engaged lover. The difference proved to be very great, and if any one could change all the admirers of right-thinking girls into engaged lovers it would be a great benefit for our sex, even in case marriage were not to follow. The love of the two for each other does not decrease, but it becomes more rational. Numberless little follies, coquetry and caprice of all kinds disappear. If he likes her better in a simple morning-cap than in the most elegant head-dress, a right-thinking girl will certainly cease to care much about the style in which her hair is arranged; and nothing is more natural than that he too should think rationally, and rather wish to form a domestic wife for himself than a dressed-up doll for the world. And this feeling will run through every thing else.

If a girl has the good fortune to be engaged to a sensible well-informed man, she will learn more from him than the best finishing schools or a residence abroad could teach her; for she will not only accept with pleasure all the culture he gives, but will try to make progress by herself. Love knows of few impossibilities, and at last the subjection so necessary and so becoming for a

woman begins. An engaged lover does not rule, like a husband; he only asks, and she whom he loves tries to find out his wishes and fulfil them even before they are uttered.

Experience taught me too in this way what I would not for very much have missed. I was happy, really happy so far as one can be so in this world; that is to say, for a short time.

One summer passed in this quiet happiness. Narcissus did not give me the slightest reason for complaint; he grew dearer to me from day to day, my whole soul clung to him; he knew this, and knew too how to value it. Meanwhile, out of apparent trifles that something arose, which by degrees undermined our relation to each other.

Narcissus behaved as an engaged lover, and never dared to ask more of me than is allowed to those who are engaged. But as to the limits of virtue and propriety we differed very much. I wished to walk securely, and would permit no familiarity that might not have been seen by all the world. He, accustomed to dainties, found this diet very severe. Hence arose constant contentions. He praised my conduct and at the same time tried to undermine my resolution.

The words "it may become serious" of my old teacher came back to my mind, and with those words the remedy I had then proposed.

My acquaintance with God had returned in some measure. He had given me a lover who was very dear to me: for this I was thankful to Him. That earthly love had the effect of concentrating my mind and setting it in motion, and was in no way opposed to the occupation of my thoughts with God. I poured out to Him quite naturally the cause of my anxiety, not noticing

that the very thing which made me anxious was what I really wished for. In my own eyes I was very strong: I did not by any means pray "Lead me not into temptation," for I thought myself far beyond the reach of temptation. In this light tinsel of my own virtue I boldly appeared before God. He did not cast me from Him, but at the slightest approach left behind in my soul a tender, gentle impression, which moved me to seek Him again.

For me the whole world beside Narcissus was dead: nothing else had any charm. My love for dress even had but one aim, and that was to please him; if I knew he were not to see me I took no pains with my toilette. I was fond of dancing, but if he were away the motion seemed irksome and unpleasant. Even for brilliant *réunions* I could not resolve to buy new dresses or have the old ones trimmed up in fashionable style, if he were not to be present. To me one person was as pleasant as another; in other words, they were all alike burdensome. I considered such an evening well spent, if I sat down to a game of cards with a party of elder people, though I never had had any pleasure in such amusements, and if some kind old friend chanced to laugh at me for this, I would smile perhaps for the first time in the whole evening. It was the same with walks and every other kind of social amusement imaginable.

"Him I had chosen, him alone;
He was for me the only one
Beyond his favour sought I none."

Thus I was often lonely, even in society, and would have preferred perfect solitude. But my busy mind could neither sleep nor dream; I felt and thought, and at last attained a facility in speaking of my feelings and thoughts

to God. Feelings of another, but not of a contradictory kind, then developed themselves within me. For my love to Narcissus was in perfect conformity with the plan of creation, and nowhere came in collision with my duty. But though not contradictory, they were infinitely diverse. Narcissus' image was the only one that floated before my mind, and in which all my love centred; but the other feeling centred in no image and was inexpressibly agreeable. I have lost it now and cannot bring it back.

Of this, Narcissus, who knew all my other secrets, heard nothing. I soon discovered that he thought differently, for he often gave me books which, either gravely or with lighter weapons, attacked everything that could be called a connexion with the Invisible. I read them because they came from him, and when I had finished could not remember a word of their contents.

With regard to science and general information too, our intercourse was not without its contradictions. Like all men, he laughed at learned women and instructed me unceasingly. Every subject, law excepted, he used to talk over with me, and, while bringing me perpetually works of all kinds, often repeated the doubtful doctrine that a woman ought to hide her knowledge more carefully than a Calvinist in a Roman Catholic country his creed. But as I was really accustomed to be very natural in society, and so did not pretend to be cleverer or better-informed than formerly, he was the first to give way to vanity and to speak of my talents and superiority when occasion offered.

A celebrated man of the world, at that time held in much esteem for his influence, talents and intellect, was a great favourite at our court. He took very much notice of Narcissus and liked to have him constantly near himself. Among other subjects they once had an argument

on the virtues of women. Narcissus repeated the conversation to me in all its details; I was not behindhand with my remarks, and he asked me to put them into the form of a written essay. I wrote French pretty fluently, my old teacher having laid a good foundation. My correspondence with Narcissus had always been carried on in French, and indeed in those days a refined education could only be gained from French books. My essay pleased the Count, and I had to deliver up some little poems which I had written a short time before. In short, Narcissus seemed to be boasting of his future bride most unreservedly, and the story ended, to his great satisfaction, in a very clever letter in French verse written and sent to him by the Count on his departure. In this letter their friendly discussions were alluded to, and at its close my friend was congratulated on the happiness that lay in prospect for him—the experiencing, after so many doubts and errors, what virtue really was in the arms of a virtuous and charming wife.

This poem was shown to me first, but after that to almost every one, and of course every one had his own ideas on it. Such things happened often, and in the same way all the strangers whom he admired and valued were introduced at our house.

In order to consult our very clever physician, a Count's family came to reside for some time in the place where we lived. Narcissus was treated like a son in their house; he introduced me; they were people of real worth, and when with them both my mind and my feelings were occupied and entertained; even society seemed to amuse itself in a less hollow fashion there than elsewhere. They all knew in what relation we stood to one another, treated us as circumstances dictated, and passed over our principal connexion in silence. I mention this

acquaintance, because of the influence it exercised on my future life.

Nearly a year of our engagement had now passed away, and with it our spring-time. Summer came and everything grew hotter and graver.

Two or three unexpected deaths rendered some appointments vacant, for which Narcissus was a fit candidate. The moment drew near that was to decide my fate, and while he and all our friends were making every possible effort at court to destroy certain impressions which were unfavourable to him, and to secure the desired post, I brought my petition to my invisible Friend. I was so kindly received that I gladly came again. I confessed freely my wish that Narcissus might obtain the appointment, but my prayer was not vehement, and I did not demand its fulfilment on the ground that I had prayed for it.

The post was given to a very inferior candidate. I was terribly distressed at the news, ran into my room and locked the door behind me. The first pang of sorrow melted in tears; my next thought was: this has not happened by chance, and was followed immediately by the resolution to submit cheerfully, as this apparent evil must in reality be meant for my good. Then the sweetest calmest feelings crowded into my mind, scattering all the clouds of sorrow. I felt that with such help everything could be borne, and appeared at table in good spirits, to the great astonishment of my family.

Narcissus had less strength than I; I was obliged to comfort him; reverses occurred too in his family which weighed on his mind deeply, and as we placed perfect confidence in one another, he told me all. His negotiations for obtaining service under a foreign government were not more successful. I felt all this deeply for his

sake and my own, and ended by carrying every sorrow to the place where my petitions were so graciously heard.

The more soothing these experiences, the oftener I tried to renew them, and to find comfort where I had so often been consoled. But it was not always to be found: I was like one who would warm himself in the sunshine, and something throws a shadow in his way. "What is this?" I asked myself. I investigated the matter eagerly, and clearly perceived that everything depended on the condition of my soul: if that were not entirely turned towards God I remained cold, felt no answering influence from Him and could not recognize His reply to my prayer. The second question was: "What prevents my soul from turning in a straight direction towards God?" Here I was in a wide field and got entangled in an investigation which lasted nearly all the second year of my engagement. I could have put an end to it earlier, for I soon came on the track; but I would not confess this, and sought all manner of excuses.

I soon found that the straight direction of my soul towards God was disturbed by foolish amusements, and by the occupation of my thoughts with unworthy things; the *How* and *Where* were soon clear enough to me. But how was I to manage in a world where every one was either indifferent or madly extravagant? I would gladly have left the matter undecided, and lived on at random as others did who seemed quite happy, but I did not dare to do so; I experienced too much opposition from within myself. Yet even if I wished, I could not absent myself from society or change the circumstances in which I lived. I was, once for all, confined within a circle. I could not disembarass myself of certain conditions, and in the matter which touched me

most nearly fatal difficulties crowded and accumulated upon me. I often lay down in tears, and rose again with tears in the morning, after a sleepless night; I stood in need of powerful help, and God would not grant it me so long as I ran about in my fool's cap and bells.

I began to weigh all my actions separately. Dancing and cards came first under consideration. There was nothing that had ever been spoken, thought or written for or against these amusements that I did not hunt up, talk over, read, ponder on, add to or reject; I tormented myself unspeakably. By giving up these things I was certain to offend Narcissus, for he was dreadfully afraid of the ridiculous appearance which conscientious scruples give in the eyes of the world. And as I was committing what I held to be folly—pernicious folly—not even because I liked it, but entirely for his sake, it was all fearfully difficult for me.

Without a great deal of tiresome detail and repetition, it would be impossible for me to give an idea of the pains I took, when joining in such amusements and actions as distracted my mind and destroyed my inward peace, to keep my heart at the same time open to the workings of the Invisible Being, and how sorely I felt that the difference could not be adjusted in this way. For directly I put on the garment of folly, it ceased to be a mere mask; the folly itself penetrated me at once through and through.

May I be permitted here to transgress the laws of mere historical narration, and to make a few observations on what at that time was passing within me? What could have so changed my tastes and character that in my twenty-second year—nay, even earlier—I took no pleasure in things which are generally an innocent amusement for people of that age? Why were they not innocent for

me? I think I may answer: they were really not innocent for me, because I was not, like others of my own age and position, unacquainted with my own soul. No, I knew from experiences which had come to me unsought, that there were nobler and higher emotions, that these really give us that pleasure which we seek in vain from mere diversions, and that at the same time there lies stored up in them a treasure to strengthen us in time of sorrow.

But social enjoyment and the diversions of youth must have possessed a great charm for me: I found it impossible to enjoy them as though I enjoyed them not. How many things I could do now, if I wished, with the greatest indifference, which at that time unsettled and even threatened to obtain the mastery over me! There was no medium: either I must give up these attractive amusements, or be deprived of the reviving feelings which comforted my soul.

Before I was really conscious of it however, the conflict within my soul had been already decided. Though there might be something in me that hankered after these pleasures of sense I had really ceased to enjoy them. A man may be very fond of wine, but if he finds himself in a cellar where the air threatens to stifle him, he will lose all desire to drink, though many full casks may be standing round him. Pure air is more than wine: I felt that only too keenly, and from the first it would have cost me little consideration to choose what was good, in preference to what was attractive, if the fear of losing Narcissus' affection had not held me back. But when at last, after a thousand struggles and repeated reflection, I came to look keenly at the tie which bound me to him, I discovered that it was weak and could be broken. I perceived that what confined me in this space so void

of air was nothing more than a glass bell: have strength to break it and you are saved!

No sooner thought than dared. I threw off the mask and acted on every occasion as my own heart dictated. I loved Narcissus all this time tenderly, but the thermometer which had hitherto been standing in hot water was now hanging in the open air, and could not rise higher than the warmth of the atmosphere allowed.

Unfortunately the air cooled seriously. Narcissus began to draw back and behave distantly: he was at liberty to do this, but my thermometer fell as he drew back. My family noticed our conduct; I was questioned, and they were beginning to express surprise, but I explained with resolute defiance that up to that time I had sacrificed myself enough, and that I was still ready to share all the crosses and troubles of future life with him, but that with regard to my own actions I must demand perfect freedom; that what I did or left undone must depend entirely on my own convictions; that I did not wish to persist in any opinion obstinately—on the contrary should be glad to hear every argument on the other side—but as it concerned my own happiness the decision must depend on myself and I would suffer no compulsion of any kind. Just as little as the most celebrated physician could induce me to take any article of food, which, though perhaps perfectly wholesome in itself and liked by many, I knew by experience was invariably injurious to my own health—as, for instance, coffee—so little, nay even far less, would I allow myself to be persuaded that an action which confused and unsettled my mind could be of any moral benefit to me.

As these arguments had long been preparing quietly in my own mind, to discuss them was rather pleasant than annoying to me; I gave vent to all that was in my

heart and learnt the full value of my resolution. I did not yield one hair's breadth, and those to whom I owed no filial respect were despatched with a short sharp answer. In my own family I soon conquered. My mother had held similar opinions from her youth up, only in her case they had never reached maturity. No difficulties had forced her to carry out her convictions into action, and given her the courage to do so. She was happy in beholding her unexpressed wishes fulfilled in her child. My youngest sister seemed to draw closer to me, the second was attentive and quiet. My aunt had the most objections to make. The reasons she gave seemed to her unanswerable, and were so in reality because they were entirely common-place. I was at last obliged to let her see that she had in no sense a voice in the matter, after which she at least seldom allowed it to be noticed that she persisted in her opinion. She was also the only person who watched this occurrence close at hand, and yet remained unmoved. I do her no injustice when I say that she had no feeling and the narrowest ideas.

My father acted quite in keeping with his character. He spoke little but often with me on the matter. His arguments were reasonable, and as *his* unanswerable; but my deep feeling that I was right gave me strength to dispute the point with him. These scenes however soon changed; I was forced to make an appeal to his heart. Oppressed by the force of his reasoning, I broke out into the most impassioned expostulations, gave loose both to my tongue and my tears, proved to him how dearly I loved Narcissus, what constraint I had put upon myself during the last two years, and how certain I was that I was doing right now; that I was ready to seal this certainty by the loss of my beloved future husband, my

seeming happiness and, if need be, all I possessed in the world; that I would rather leave my country, parents and friends, and earn my bread in a foreign land, than act contrary to my convictions. He concealed his feeling, was silent on the matter for a time, and at last declared himself openly on my side.

From that time Narcissus avoided our house, and my father then gave up attending the club at which they were accustomed to meet once every week. The affair created a sensation both at court and in the town. People talked us over as is usual in such cases, for the public is apt to take a vehement interest in things of this kind, having been spoiled by the influence its opinion exercises on weak minds. I knew the world well enough to be aware, that the very persons who have persuaded you to a course of action, are often the first to blame you for pursuing that course, and even without this knowledge my state of mind at that time made me perfectly indifferent to such passing opinions—for me they were as if they had never been.

On the other hand I would not give up the indulgence of my affection for Narcissus. He had become invisible, but my heart had not changed towards him. I was still his, if he would consent to leave my convictions undisturbed; without this condition I would have refused a kingdom with him. For some months I carried these thoughts and feelings about with me, and at last, when I felt strong and quiet enough to go to work calmly, wrote him a polite, but not affectionate, note asking why he never came to see me.

As I knew that he was not fond of explaining himself, but even in matters of inferior importance was accustomed to act silently in the way he thought good,

I urged him to give his reasons. I received in answer a long and, as it seemed to me, insipid epistle, in a prolix style and full of unmeaning phrases, to the effect that he could not make me an offer of his hand until he had a better appointment; that no one knew so well as I how many hindrances had hitherto lain in his path; that perhaps such a long fruitless engagement might prejudice my *renommée*, and if I would allow him to remain at his present distance, the moment he were in a position to make me happy, the promise he had given would be regarded by him as sacred.

I wrote back at once that as the matter was well known to all the world, it might possibly be a little too late to think of my *renommée*: for which however my conscience and innocence were the best guarantees: that I released him hereby at once and without hesitation from his promise, and wished that the release might bring him happiness. Before another hour had passed I received a short answer in effect precisely the same as the first; repeating, that on obtaining the desired appointment he should ask whether I would share his good fortune with him.

For me this meant nothing. I told my relations and friends that our engagement was at an end, and it was so in reality. Nine months later he obtained all he could have wished, and asked my hand in marriage again, but with the condition that, as the wife of a man who must live in considerable style, I should have to change my opinions. I returned a polite refusal, and with heart and mind hastened away from the whole affair, just as one longs to get out of the theatre directly the curtain has fallen. Soon after he, as now easily lay in his power, made a very advantageous match both as to money and

position; I knew that in his own fashion he was happy, and felt quite at ease about him.

I must not however pass over the fact in silence, that both before and after he obtained his post, some very good offers of marriage were made me, all which I unhesitatingly refused, though my father and mother would have liked me to be more compliant.

And now, after this stormy March and April, the most lovely May weather seemed destined to be my portion. With good health I enjoyed an indescribable peace of mind; my loss was a gain to me in whichever direction I looked. Young and full of feeling as I was, the natural world seemed to me a thousand times more beautiful than formerly, when I needed company and games to prevent the time passed in the lovely garden from seeming too long. As I had made up my mind not to be ashamed of my piety, I took courage further, and allowed my love for art and science to be known. I drew, painted and read, and found plenty of supporters. Instead of the great world which I had forsaken, or rather, which had forsaken me, a smaller, but far richer and more entertaining one, had formed around me. I was fond of society, and confess that in giving up my old acquaintances the prospect of loneliness had made me shudder. But I found myself abundantly indemnified, nay, perhaps almost too much so. My acquaintance had never been so extensive, and this, not only with those of my own nation whose opinions coincided with mine, but also with foreigners. My story had become notorious, and many people were curious to see the girl who had preferred God before her lover. Just at that time too a certain religious tone of feeling was perceptible in Germany. Anxiety for the salvation of the soul had awakened in many families among our highest nobility. Neither

were instances of the same kind wanting among the lower nobility, while in the classes beneath, these ideas were very widely spread.

My connexion with the Count's family of whom I have already spoken grew closer. Their numbers had been increased by the arrival of some relatives in the town. These very valuable friends sought my society as I did theirs. They had a very large connexion, and in their house I became acquainted with a considerable proportion of the princes, counts and gentlemen of the empire. My opinions were a secret to no one, and, whether they were respected or merely made allowance for, my end was obtained: I was allowed to remain unattacked.

But these were not the only ways by which I was to be led back again into the world. A step-brother of my father, who hitherto had only paid us a passing visit now and then, came to stay at our house. He had quitted the service of his own court, where he had earned respect and had possessed influence, only because things were not entirely conducted according to his ideas. In the correctness of his judgment and sternness of his character he was very like my father, but the latter possessed a certain measure of softer feeling which made it easier for him to yield in business affairs, and, though not to do himself, yet to permit to be done by others, things contrary to his own conviction, allowing his wrath to evaporate afterwards either in silence by himself, or confidentially in his own family. My uncle was a much younger man, and his independent feeling was not a little strengthened by his circumstances. His mother had been very rich, in addition to which he had a large fortune to expect from her near and distant relatives. He thus needed no extraneous addition to his own property, whereas

my father's private income was so small, that he was fast tethered to his post by the pay he received from it.

Family sorrow too had helped to make my uncle's character still more inflexible. He had lost a charming wife and a promising son early in his married life, and since that time, had seemed to wish the removal of every thing and person that was not dependent on his own will.

In our family it was sometimes whispered with a little self-complacency that he was not likely to marry again, and we children might look upon ourselves as heirs to a large fortune. I took no further notice of this, but the behaviour of the others was not a little regulated by these hopes. His own character being so firm, he had accustomed himself never to contradict any one in conversation, but rather to listen kindly to every opinion, and even to confirm and raise the speaker's mode of looking at a subject by means of argument and illustration. Those who did not know him always fancied he was of their own opinion, for his understanding was predominant and he could make all kinds of different ideas his own. With me however he was not so successful, as feelings came under consideration of which he had not the faintest conception, and kindly, sympathisingly and reasonably as he talked over my opinions with me, I could not but be struck with the fact that he evidently had no idea of the principle which lay at the root of all my actions.

Reserved as he was, still after some time we discovered the real reason of his unusually long stay with us. We could see at last that he had chosen our youngest sister from amongst us, with the intention of marrying her well and happily, according to his own ideas; and certainly her attractions, both bodily and

mental, were such, that (especially if a good fortune were thrown into the scale along with them) she might lay claim to the highest match. His feelings with regard to me were expressed in dumb show; he placed me, namely, as *Stiftsdame* or Canoness, on a foundation for unmarried ladies of good family, the revenues of which post I soon began to receive.

My sister was neither so satisfied with his care and kindness, nor so thankful for it as I. She confided to me a matter in which her heart was engaged, and which till then she had been prudent enough to hide, fearing what indeed really happened—that I should use every possible means to dissuade her from marrying a man for whom she ought to have felt no liking. I did my utmost and succeeded. My uncle's intentions were so earnest and unmistakeable, and the prospect for my sister, with her taste for a worldly life, so attractive, that she mustered strength to give up a fancy of which even her own judgment disapproved.

As she now no longer evaded my uncle's gentle guidance, the foundation for his plan was soon laid. She was appointed maid of honour at a neighbouring court, where the lady highest in office was very much respected; she was also a friend of his own, to whose kind care he could entrust my sister, and on whom he could depend for her further cultivation and improvement. I accompanied her to the place of her new abode. We had both of us reason to be very satisfied with our reception, and sometimes I could not help laughing to myself at the part which as *Stiftsdame*—young and pious *Stiftsdame*—I had now to play in the world.

In former times such a position would have confused me, perhaps even turned my head; but now I was calm in the midst of all that surrounded me. I quietly allowed

them to spend some hours over my hair, and put on my finery, having all the while no other thought than that it was necessary to wear this court-livery in my present position. In the well-filled drawing-rooms I spoke with each and every one, but no one either by his appearance or character left a strong impression on my mind, and almost the only feeling I brought home from these evenings was bodily weariness. Still it was improving to my understanding to see so many people, and I made the acquaintance of some women (more especially the lady under whom my sister had the good fortune to be placed) who were truly patterns of every human virtue.

On my return home however, I felt that this journey had not been so profitable for my health. With the greatest moderation, and strictest observance of diet, I still had not been, as at home, mistress of my own time and powers. Food, exercise, hours of rising and going to bed, dressing and drives, had not depended on my own will and feelings. In the social round of life no one can come to a stand-still without being impolite; everything that was necessary I had done with pleasure, believing it to be my duty, knowing that it was only for a time and feeling in especially good health. Nevertheless, this unusual and disturbed life must have affected me more powerfully than I had felt at the time, for I had scarcely reached home and rejoiced my parents by a satisfactory account, than an attack of hemorrhage came on which, though not dangerous and soon over, left me for a long time perceptibly weaker.

Here was a new lesson for me to learn. I did it cheerfully. Nothing bound me to the world, and I was convinced that I should never find the right thing here. I was therefore in the calmest and most cheerful frame

of mind, and having renounced all claim to life, life was preserved.)

But I had to bear a fresh trial. My mother was attacked by an oppressive complaint, which she had to endure five years before paying the debt of nature. During this time we were exercised in many ways. Often, when fear and anxiety obtained the mastery over her, she would have us all called to her bedside in the night, that our presence might at least serve as a distraction, though it could do her no good. But heavier, indeed almost beyond endurance, was the pressure, when my father began to fail too. Since his youth he had suffered from frequent and violent attacks of headache, but they had never lasted longer than thirty-six hours. Now these attacks became permanent, and when they reached their highest pitch his sufferings broke my heart. In those stormy times I felt my bodily weakness most keenly: it hindered me from performing my holiest, dearest duties, or made their performance extremely difficult.

This was the time for testing whether the path I had taken led to truth, or to a mere fancy—whether I had only taken my cue from others, or whether the object of my belief had a reality. To my unspeakable relief I always found the latter to be the case. I had sought and found the means of directing my heart unswervingly to God: had sought and found communion with the “beloved ones;”* and this it was which alleviated every sorrow. Just as a traveller eagerly seeks the shade, so, when oppressed by everything without, my soul fled to this place of refuge and never returned empty.

In later days, certain defenders of religion, who seem to have more zeal than feeling for the cause they undertake to defend, have called on their fellow-believers to

* Thus in the original.

publish instances of prayers which have been really heard; probably, because they wished to have that in black and white with which they could attack their opponents in thoroughly diplomatic and legal fashion. How unacquainted such people must be with the true feeling! How little real experience of the thing itself they can have had!

I may venture to say that when I sought God under the pressure of distress I never came back empty. This is saying very, very much, and I cannot say more; for important as every experience at this critical moment was for me, if I were to quote each separate case, my tale would sound tame, trivial and improbable. How happy I was in feeling that a thousand little occurrences together proved, as surely as breath proves life, that I was not without God in the world. He was near me, I was before Him. This, carefully avoiding all systematic theological terms, I can say with the greatest truth.

How much I wish that at that time I myself had been free from all system! but who among us arrives early at the happy consciousness of pure coherence and harmony in his own being, without extraneous forms? I was in earnest about my salvation: I modestly put my trust in the views of others; submitted myself entirely to the Halle theory of conversion, and yet could find no way of making my nature and character fit into the mould.

According to that system the change of heart must begin with a profound terror on account of sin. In this distress, the heart must acknowledge more or less that it deserves punishment, and must have such a foretaste of Hell as shall render the pleasures of sin bitter. At last a very sensible assurance of grace ought to be felt, which

assurance however, in the sequel vanishes from time to time, and has to be resought with earnestness.

Nothing of all this, either in a near or remote degree, happened to me. When I sought God with sincerity, He allowed Himself to be found, and did not reproach me with past events. I could see afterwards in what I had been, and still was, unworthy, but there was no distress or terror attached to the confession of my infirmities. Fear of hell I never felt for a moment; indeed the idea of an evil spirit and a place of torment and punishment, could in no way find admission into my circle of notions. People who were living without God, and whose hearts were closed against confidence in and love for the Invisible, appeared to me already so miserable, that a hell and outward chastisements seemed rather to hold out a promise of alleviation than threaten any aggravation of their penalty. I only needed to look at people whose hearts here on earth harboured malice and hatred—who hardened themselves against any kind of good and wished to force what was bad and evil on themselves and others—who would rather close their eyes by day that they might be able to declare the sun gives no light—how inexpressibly wretched such people seemed to me! Could any one create a hell that would make their condition worse?

I continued in this state of mind, unchanged from one day to another, during ten years. It bore many tests; amongst others the painful deathbed of my dear mother. On this occasion, I was frank enough not to conceal my cheerful frame of mind from people who were not only pious, but strictly orthodox, in their doctrinal views, and had in consequence to hear many a friendly reprimand on the subject. They believed themselves to be seizing the right moment for representing how earnestly we

should seek to lay a good foundation while health and strength are ours.

Nor did I wish to be wanting in earnestness. I allowed myself to be convinced for the moment, and would have given anything to have been sad and terrified. But how surprised I was to find that this was once for all impossible! The very thought of God made me cheerful and happy; and even my dear mother's painful end could not inspire me with any fear of death. But in those momentous hours I learnt many and far other things than my self-appointed preceptors believed.

By degrees I began to question the opinions of many celebrated authorities, but kept my sentiments carefully to myself. A certain intimate friend of mine, to whom at first I had allowed too much liberty, persisted in interfering in my affairs. I was obliged to get rid of her too, and told her once quite decidedly that she might save herself all trouble, for I did not need her advice: I knew my God, and would take Him alone for my guide. She was very much offended, and I believe has never forgiven me.

This determination to free myself from the advice and influence of my friends in spiritual things resulted in my gaining courage to pursue my own way in external matters also. Without the support of my faithful invisible guide it might have fared ill with me, and I still wonder, when I think of this wise and happy leading. No one really knew on what everything that happened to me depended: I did not even know myself.

Of that thing—that unexplained evil thing, which separates us from the Being to whom we owe our life—from the Being out of whom all that can be called life must draw its sustenance—of that thing which people call sin, I knew as yet nothing.

In communion with my invisible Friend I felt the sweetest enjoyment of all my vital powers. My desire to make this enjoyment perpetual was so great, that I gladly avoided whatever disturbed my communion with Him, and thus experience was my best teacher. But it was with me as with the sick who refuse to take medicine, and think to cure their maladies by attention to diet alone. That does some good, but is not nearly enough.

I could not always remain in solitude, though it was the best remedy for that distraction of mind which was peculiar to me. When I came out of it again the turmoil of life made all the more impression on me. The advantage most peculiar to myself consisted in my preference for quiet being so strong that I always returned to it at last of my own accord. I recognised dimly my own need and weakness, and tried to help matters by not exposing myself to temptation.

For seven years I had dieted myself in this careful fashion. I did not look upon my condition as bad; I rather considered it desirable, and but for some remarkable circumstances should have remained at this point; it was a strange road that led me further. Against the advice of all my friends I began a new connexion. Their objections startled me at first, but I turned to my invisible Guide, and as He permitted, went on my way unhesitatingly.

A man of intellect, feeling and talent, had lately settled and bought land in our neighbourhood. He and his family were among the strangers whose acquaintance I had made. Our customs, domestic arrangements and habits agreed in many points, and this drew us together.

Philo, by which name I intend to call him, was not young, and in certain business affairs was of the greatest

use to my father, whose powers were beginning to fail. He soon became the intimate friend of our family, and finding in me, as he said, a person free from the dissipation and emptiness of the great world, and yet not dry and narrow-minded, as was the case with most pious people, we were soon confidential friends. To me he was both agreeable and useful.

Though I possessed neither talent nor inclination for mixing in worldly affairs, or seeking to influence them, yet I liked to hear about them and know what was going on abroad and at home. In worldly matters my desire was to obtain clear ideas, in which no feeling was involved: emotion, fervour, affection, I reserved for God, my family and my friends.

These last were, if I may venture to say so, jealous of my new intimacy with Philo, and were right from more than one point of view, in the warnings they gave me on the matter. I suffered very much in secret, as I found it impossible to look upon their objections as empty or self-interested, and yet, accustomed as I had always been to subordinate my own opinions to those of others, this time my convictions would not yield. I besought God, in this instance too, to warn, prevent and guide me, and as after doing this my heart did not dissuade me, I went on the way I had begun in confidence.

On the whole Philo might be said to resemble Narcissus distantly, but a religious education had condensed and enlivened his feelings. He had less vanity and more principle, and if you might call Narcissus subtle, exact, persevering and untiring in worldly affairs, Philo was clear, acute and rapid, and did his work with incredible ease. Through him I became acquainted with the most intimate private circumstances of nearly all the people of distinction I had learnt to know by sight in

society, and from my watch-tower I enjoyed looking on at this turmoil in the distance. Philo could conceal nothing from me now, and by degrees confided to me all his outward and inward relations. Seeing beforehand certain circumstances and complications, I was afraid for him, and the evil came sooner than I had supposed, for he had always kept back certain confessions, and even at last only revealed enough for me to suspect the worst.

What an effect this took on me! Here was a set of entirely new experiences. With unspeakable sadness I beheld an Agathon, who, having been brought up in the groves of Delphi, had not yet paid the due fees for his experience, and was now discharging the debt with heavy arrears of interest: and this Agathon was my intimate friend. My sympathy with him was warm and entire; I suffered with him, and we were both in the strangest state of feeling.

After having occupied myself long with his state of mind, I turned to contemplate myself. The thought: "You are no better than he," rose like a little cloud before me and grew larger and larger by degrees till it darkened all my soul.

I then ceased to *think*: "You are no better than he;" I *felt* it, and felt it so that I could have wished never to feel it again; but this was no transition state. For more than a year I had to live under the feeling that, if an invisible hand had not hedged me round about, I might have been a Girard, a Cartouche, a Damiens or any other monster you like to name: I clearly felt the capability of being so, within me. Oh, God! what a discovery!

Totally unable hitherto to perceive in the faintest degree the reality of sin by my own personal experience,

the foreboding of its possibility had now become awfully clear. Yet I had no knowledge of the evil; I only dreaded it. I felt that I was capable of being guilty, but had nothing to accuse myself of.

Fully convinced that a spirit constituted as I was compelled to acknowledge mine to be, could not be fit for that union with the Highest Being which I had hoped for after death, I still did not in the least fear that I should ultimately be separated from Him. With all the evil that I discovered in myself, I still loved *Him*, hated these feelings, and longed to hate them still more earnestly. My greatest wish was to be delivered from this disease and tendency to disease, and I felt sure the great Physician would not refuse His help.

The only question was: What is the remedy for this disease? The practice of virtue? This was not to be thought of. Ten years I had lived in more than the mere practice of virtue, and yet, during that time, the abominations I had now discovered had been lying hidden deep within my soul. Might they not have broken loose in me as they did in David when he beheld Bathsheba? was not he too a friend of God, and was not I in my inmost heart convinced that God was my friend?

Was this then an unavoidable human weakness? Must we consent at some one time or another to experience the tyranny of our inclinations? And, with the best desires, is there no choice left for us but to look back on our fall with loathing, and fall again when a similar occasion presents itself?

From doctrines of mere morality I could obtain no comfort. Neither the strictness by which they endeavour to keep our inclinations under, nor the complaisance with which they try to make these inclinations pass for virtues, could satisfy me. The fundamental ideas gained

by intercourse with my invisible Friend were already worth far more for me.

In studying the Psalms written by David after his hateful catastrophe, it struck me forcibly, that he looked on the evil dwelling in him as having existed already, even in the substance out of which he had been formed; but that he wished to be freed from sin, and prayed most earnestly for a pure heart.

But how was that to be obtained? I knew what answer the symbolical books would give, and it was a familiar Bible truth to me that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." But now for the first time I perceived that I had never yet understood this oft-repeated sentence. The questions: What does it mean? how does it come to pass? wrought within me day and night. At last it dawned faintly upon me, that what I sought was to be found in the incarnation of the Eternal Word, by whom all things and we also, were created. That the great First Cause had descended into the depths in which we lay plunged—depths which His eye had penetrated and comprehended: had dwelt there and passed through every relation of human life, step by step, from conception and birth until the grave: had ascended again by this strange circuitous path into those bright heights, where we too are to dwell in order to be happy: this was revealed to me as in a faint twilight distance.

O why, when we speak of such things, are we obliged to use figures which only indicate outward conditions? What to Him is height or depth, darkness or light? It is only we who have an Above and a Below, a Day and a Night. And for this very reason He was made like unto us: in no other way could we have had a share in Him,

But how are we to take our share of this priceless benefit? "Through faith," is the scriptural answer. But what is faith? Of what use can my belief in the relation of an event be to me? I must be able to appropriate its effects, its results. And this appropriating faith must be a peculiar condition of mind, unusual to human beings in their natural state.

"Then, O Almighty God, give me faith!" I prayed once in the greatest distress of heart. I leaned on the little table at which I was sitting, and buried my tearful face in my hands. I was really in the condition in which we always ought to be, but so seldom are, if God is to hear our prayers.

And who can describe my feelings in that moment? My soul was drawn by one forcible movement to the cross on which Jesus died. I was drawn (and can compare it to nothing else) as the soul is drawn to some one absent whom we dearly love: an approach probably far more real and substantial than we suspect. In this way my soul drew near to the Incarnate and Crucified One, and in that moment I knew what faith was.

"This is faith!" I said; and started up half frightened. I then tried to make sure of this feeling and view, and in a short time became convinced that my spirit had received a power of soaring upwards, quite new to it.

For feelings such as these, words are wanting. I could distinguish them clearly from all fanciful ideas; there was nothing imagined, nothing pictured in them, and yet they imparted as much certainty with regard to some object referred to as our imaginations do when they paint for us the likeness of some absent one whom we dearly love.

When the first ecstasy was over, I noticed that this condition of mind was not unknown to me, only I had

never experienced it in such strength before: I had never been able to hold it fast, or make it my own. On the whole I am disposed to believe that every human soul has felt something of the kind, at one time or another. It is without doubt this which teaches each of us that there is a God.

Hitherto I had been very content with these temporary accessions of strength, and if my remarkable destiny had not subjected me to such unexpected torment during the past year—if I had not learnt during that time so totally to mistrust my own powers—I might perhaps have remained content with this condition of things.

But now, since that great moment, wings had been given me. I could rise and soar above the things which formerly seemed so threatening, as a bird rises and soars singing over the swiftest stream, while the dog has to remain barking anxiously on the other bank.

My joy was indescribable, and though at first I did not speak of it, my family soon noticed an unwonted cheerfulness in me, for which they could assign no reason.

O! if I had only kept silence always, and tried to retain this unsullied state of feeling in my soul! if I had only not allowed myself to be led away by circumstances into revealing my secret! I should then have saved myself another great circuit in my onward course.

As during the first ten years of my Christian life my soul had been destitute of this needful strength, I had tried to help myself, like other honest people in the same case, by filling my imagination with images bearing reference to God: a practice which is really very useful, as by its means hurtful images and their evil consequences are kept at a distance. The soul too, by laying hold of

one or another of these spiritual images, rises with them, like a young bird fluttering up by degrees from twig to twig. So long as nothing better is to be had, this practice is not to be condemned.

Images and impressions that lead the mind to God, are supplied by the institutions of the Church, the chime of its bells, the tones of the organ, hymns, and especially the sermons of our spiritual teachers. For these last I was eager beyond expression. No weather, no bodily weakness, could keep me from church, and the chime of the Sunday bells was the only thing that could make me feel impatient on a sick bed. Our principal court chaplain was a most excellent man; I much enjoyed hearing his sermons; his colleagues too I esteemed, and I could pick out the golden apples of God's word, though mixed with commoner fruit and offered in vessels of clay. To these public services I added various private means of edification, as they are called, which only nourished fancy and fed a more refined kind of sense. I was so accustomed to this course, and considered it so good, that even then nothing higher occurred to me. For my soul has only feelers and no eyes; it only gropes, it does not see. O! that it might receive eyes and dare to behold!

I went now full of expectation to hear the sermons; but alas, what befell me! I found no longer what I had been used to find. These preachers were blunting their teeth upon the shell, while I was enjoying the kernel. I could not but weary of them before long; but I was already too spoiled to hold fast to that only which I knew I could find. I wanted images, I longed for outward impressions, fancying all the while that what I felt were pure spiritual needs.

Philo's parents had been connected with the Moravian

brethren, and in their library were many of Count Zinzendorf's writings. He had spoken two or three times to me very openly and fairly about them, and had asked me to look through some of these books, if only for the sake of making acquaintance with a new psychological phenomenon. I, however, looked upon the Count as far too terrible a heretic, and would not even read the Ebersdorf hymn-book, which my friend with the same intention had almost forced upon me.

Still in these days there was such a total lack of any outward excitements for my soul that I took up the aforesaid hymn-book almost by chance, and to my great astonishment really found hymns in it which seemed, though certainly in a very peculiar form, to refer to what I was then feeling. The originality and genuine simplicity of the expressions attracted me. Peculiar emotions seemed to have been expressed in a peculiar style; and there were no technical terms of a school to suggest anything stiff or vulgar. I was convinced that those people felt with me, and it made me happy to learn a verse at a time by heart out of their hymns, and carry it about for days in my mind.

About three months had passed in this way since the truth had been granted me. At last I determined to tell my friend Philo all, and to ask him for the books, which I had become extremely curious to see. I put my resolve in execution, though something within earnestly dissuaded me from doing so.

I told Philo the whole story in detail, and, as he played a principal part in it, and my tale in fact contained for him the severest exhortation to repentance, he was very much moved and shed floods of tears. I rejoiced at this, believing that a complete change had been effected in his mind.

He gave me all the books I asked for, and here at once was a super-abundance of food for my imagination. I made great progress in the Zinzendorf method of thinking and speaking. It must not be believed that I have at present ceased to value the Count's style of thought. I gladly do him justice. He is no empty visionary; in speaking of great truths he generally uses bold flights of imagination, and his calumniators could neither discern nor appreciate his great qualities.

I grew to love him indescribably, and, had I been my own mistress, should certainly have left country and friends to join him. We should infallibly have understood one another, but it is not likely that we should have agreed long.

Thanks be to my good genius for having at that time confined me within such narrow domestic boundaries! It was a grand journey for me in those days to reach the garden belonging to our house. I had work enough in the nursing of my weak and aged father, and in my hours of recreation I entertained myself with my imagination. I saw no one but Philo, whom my father was very fond of, but whose unreserved intimacy with me had somewhat suffered by the late explanation. His emotion had not been deep; he made a few attempts to speak in my language, and these not succeeding, avoided the subject altogether; all the more easily because his extensive information always enabled him to bring forward fresh subjects of conversation.

So now I had set up for myself as a Moravian sister, and had to hide this new turn taken by my spirit most carefully from the court-chaplain, whom, as my own clergyman, I had much reason to respect, and whose great merits were not as yet diminished in my eyes by his excessive dislike to the Moravian brethren. I am

sorry to say that this worthy man was doomed to suffer much afterwards, both on my own and others' account.

Many years before, he had made the acquaintance of a gentleman abroad, an honourable, God-fearing man, with whom, as with one who was seeking God earnestly, he had since remained in uninterrupted correspondence. That this very man later joined the Moravians, and lived for some time among them, was naturally very painful to one who had been his religious guide; but that the same friend still later fell out with the Moravian brethren, resolved on coming to live in his neighbourhood and appeared to have submitted himself once more entirely to his guidance, was equally pleasant.

Almost as if celebrating a triumph the chief shepherd presented the new arrival to all the specially-beloved lambs of his flock. Our house, as my father had given up seeing strangers, was the only one to which he was not introduced. This gentleman was very much liked. To the polished manners of a man bred at court, he united the prepossessing ways of the Moravian brethren, and many agreeable natural qualities, so that he was soon looked up to as a saint by every one, to the great joy of his spiritual patron. But alas! he had only differed with the brethren on external matters: in heart he was still quite a Moravian. The essentials of the matter were, it is true, not unimportant to him, but the toys and trifles with which the Count had dressed it up were still more to his taste. He was so accustomed to this way of speaking and thinking, that, though obliged to conceal it carefully from his old friend, whenever he found himself surrounded by a little group of the initiated he could not resist bringing forward his little verses, litanies and pictures, and, as we may imagine, was greatly applauded.

I knew nothing of the whole matter, and trifled on in my own fashion. It was long before we made each other's acquaintance.

I was visiting a sick friend in one of my leisure hours. I found a number of acquaintances there, and soon noticed that I had disturbed their conversation. I pretended not to notice this, but was surprised to see some Moravian pictures in pretty frames hanging on the wall. I quickly saw what must have happened since I had visited that house last, and welcomed the new sight by repeating some appropriate verses.

Imagine the astonishment of my friends! Explanations followed, and we were agreed and confidential on the spot.

After this I tried oftener to find opportunities of going out. Unfortunately this could only happen once in every three or four weeks, but still I made the acquaintance of the aristocratic apostle, and gradually of the whole secret community. Whenever I could I attended their meetings, and my social disposition made it unspeakably agreeable to me, to hear from and communicate to others all that until now I had been obliged to work out for myself.

But I was not too prejudiced in their favour to see that only a few really felt the meaning of the delicate words and tender expressions they used, and that these were of no greater use to them than the symbolic language of the Church had formerly been. Still, I went on their own way with them, and did not allow myself to be disturbed. I reflected that it was not my duty to search and try hearts; that I too had been pre-clergy for what was higher and better by many a harm-great merit. I took my own share away with me, and his excessive had an opportunity of speaking, dwell

especially on the meaning which, in subjects of such extreme delicacy, is often rather concealed than rendered clear by the words in which it is clothed. For the rest, I allowed every one to do as he liked in peace.

Those times of secret social enjoyment were succeeded by stormy public discussions and variances, which excited great commotion both at court and in the town—I might almost say, gave rise to not a little scandal. The time had come when our chaplain, that determined opponent of the Moravians, had, to his great but salutary humiliation, to discover that his best, and in other respects most attached, hearers, were all inclined to the side of that community. This grieved him extremely, and he so forgot all moderation in the first moments of his annoyance, that he could not draw back afterwards if he had wished. Vehement debates took place, at which fortunately, as I was only a casual member of these much-hated assemblies, and our zealous leader could not afford to lose the services of my father or of my friend, in secular affairs, my name was not mentioned. I maintained my neutrality with quiet satisfaction, for even to talk over such subjects and feelings with people well-disposed to the cause was disagreeable to me, if instead of penetrating into the deepest sense of such things they remained on the surface, and to discuss subjects with opponents, on which even friends could hardly come to a mutual understanding, seemed to me useless and even pernicious. I could soon perceive too that kind-hearted, noble people, who in this affair could not keep their hearts free from ill-will and hatred, soon became unjust, and in order to defend a mere outward form, placed their best inward treasures in peril of destruction.

Wrong as our worthy chaplain may have been in this

matter, and much as people tried to excite me against him, I never ceased to respect him heartily. I knew him thoroughly, and could look at the matter fairly from his point of view. I never knew a man who was entirely exempt from weakness, but in very superior people it is more striking than in others, and we are apt to wish that such privileged beings should have no tax or tribute at all to pay. I looked up to him as a very superior man, and hoped that my quiet neutrality might avail to bring about, if not peace, at least a truce between the combatants. I cannot tell what I might have effected; God brought the matter more quickly to an end: He took him to Himself, and those who a short time before had been quarrelling with him about mere words, all wept over his grave. No one had ever doubted his integrity and piety.

About this time I too was obliged to put away my religious toys; the recent discussions had placed in a somewhat new light for me. My uncle had quietly carried out his plans for my sister. He had proposed a young man of good family and fortune as her future husband, and justified every one's expectations by assigning her a handsome dowry. My father gladly gave his consent, my sister's heart was free; she had been prepared, and was quite willing to change a single for a married life. The wedding was to take place at my uncle's country-seat; relations and friends were invited, and we all arrived in gay spirits.

This was the first time in my life that I had felt admiration on entering any house. I had often heard people talk of my uncle's taste, his Italian architect, his collections and his library; but comparing all this with everything I had as yet seen, the result was a very motley picture in my brain. I was therefore very much astonished

at the grave and harmonious impression made on me at entering; an impression which each separate saloon and room only served to strengthen, as I passed through them. Hitherto pomp and ornament had only distracted my mind, but here I felt collected, and my thoughts were turned back upon myself. The dignity and splendour, too, of all the preparations for the coming festival, only excited a feeling of quiet pleasure; and it was as incomprehensible to me that one man could have invented and arranged the whole, as that many could have united and worked together in such an exalted spirit. And then with all this, our host and his people were so perfectly natural; there was not the slightest trace of stiffness or ceremony about them.

Quite unexpectedly, the marriage ceremony was introduced in a most charming way—by some exquisite singing; and the clergyman knew how to give to the service all the solemnity of reality. I stood next to Philo, but instead of congratulating me, he said with a deep sigh: "When I saw your sister give her hand, I felt as if some one had poured boiling water over me." "Why?" I asked. "I always feel so when I see a marriage," he answered. At the time I laughed at him, but have often enough had occasion to remember his words since.

The gay spirits of the whole party, among whom were a great many young people, made a more vivid and brilliant impression, because everything around us was dignified and grave. Furniture, table-linen, china and plate were all in keeping with the whole; and whereas in other houses, the architect had always seemed to me to be of the same school with the confectioner, in this, the very confectioners and butlers seemed to have gone to school to the architect.

As the party was to remain together for some days,

our clever and intelligent host had provided in the most various ways for our entertainment. I had no occasion here to repeat the melancholy experience I had so often passed through before: how a large, miscellaneous company, when cast on its own resources is obliged to turn to the commonest and most insipid amusements, in order, as it would seem, that the better class of minds among them, rather than the worse, may suffer from lack of entertainment.

My uncle had arranged matters differently. He had appointed two or three marshalls, if I may call them so; and one of these had to provide for the amusement of the youthful world. By him, dances, drives and games were devised and superintended, and as young people are not afraid of fresh air, and generally prefer a life out of doors, the garden and the large garden-saloon had been given up to them; to which last, for the same purpose, galleries and pavilions had been added, constructed, it is true, of nothing but boards and linen, but in such perfect proportions, that they suggested nothing less than stone and marble.

How seldom does it happen that he who brings a number of guests together, feels himself bound at the same time to provide in every way for their comfort and convenience!

Hunting and card parties, short walks, and opportunities for confidential and undisturbed conversation, were provided for the elder people, and whoever went earliest to bed was sure to find himself quartered farthest from all noise.

By this careful arrangement the space in which we all lived seemed like a little world; though, when looked at more nearly, the house was not large, and without an exact knowledge of its capacity, and the genius possessed

by our host, any one else would have been puzzled to lodge so many people in it, and accommodate each in the way he liked best.

To see arrangements that indicate throughout the presence of a sensible and reasoning being, is as agreeable as to look upon a well-made man or woman. It is a pleasure to enter a house that is thoroughly clean, even if tastelessly built and decorated; it testifies to the presence of people cultivated at least on one side of their nature. But that pleasure is doubled, when, on entering a human dwelling, we are met by evidences of a higher culture, even though it be only a culture of the senses.

All this was most vividly brought home to me at my uncle's country-seat. I had heard and read a great deal about art. Philo was very fond of pictures and had a good collection, and I had drawn a good deal in the course of my life; but I had been partly too much occupied with my own state of mind, striving before all else to become clear about the one thing needful, and partly I had found that, like other worldly things, all the works of art I had yet seen tended to distract my thoughts. Now, for the first time, external objects led me back to myself, and to my great astonishment I learned the difference between the beautiful natural song of a nightingale, and a four-part Hallelujah sung by expressive human voices.

When nothing else required his attention, my uncle used to talk to me more than to others, and I did not hide from him my joy at this new discovery. He spoke with great modesty of all he possessed and had accomplished, but, on the other hand, with great assurance of the spirit in which everything had been collected and arranged; and I could detect the kind consideration for me with

which, in his own old way, he seemed to subordinate the good of which he believed himself possessor, to that which was in my conviction right and best.

"If," he once said, "we can imagine it possible that the Creator of the world took upon Himself the form of his creatures and dwelt as they do in this world for a time, these creatures cannot but seem to us infinitely perfect, if the Creator could unite Himself so closely with them. There can exist no contradiction between the ideas of humanity and divinity; and though we may often feel a certain dissimilarity and distance between ourselves and God, that only makes it the more our duty, not, like advocates for the Evil Spirit, to look at all the infirmities and deficiencies of our nature, but rather to seek for all the perfections by which we can prove our likeness to God."

I smiled and answered: "Do not put me to the blush, dear uncle, by being so kind as to speak in my language. What you have to say is of so much importance to me, that I should like to hear it in the language most entirely your own, and what I cannot quite appropriate I will try to translate."

He answered: "Then I will speak in the language most peculiar to me, but without altering the tone of my conversation. I think we may say that man's highest merit is to determine circumstances as far as possible, and as little as possible to allow himself to be determined by them. Life and the world lie before us, as a huge quarry lies before an architect; but only he deserves the name of architect, who, out of these chance blocks thrown together by nature, has been able, with the greatest possible amount of economy, design and stability, to erect what has already existed as an idea in his own mind. The things outside of ourselves, indeed I might say the

things *on* us, are all only elements: deep *within* us lies the creative power which is able to call into being whatever ought to exist, and which gives us no rest until in one way or another, either without us or on us, we have brought it to light and being. You, my dear niece, have probably chosen the best part; you have tried to bring your moral being, your deep and loving nature into harmony with the Highest; but meanwhile, the rest of us are not I hope to be blamed, for having striven to acquaint ourselves fully with man as a being composed of senses, and to bring that sensuous being into action and thus into unity with itself."

Conversations like these brought us by degrees into a closer intimacy; and I succeeded in inducing him to speak to me without any condescension, as he would have spoken to himself. "Do not think," said my uncle, "that I am flattering you when I praise your manner of thinking and acting. I always respect people who know their own mind and steadily press forward, aware of the means that must be used to gain their end, embracing and making use of them. Whether that end be great or petty, whether it deserve praise or blame, is a matter to be considered afterwards. [Believe me, my dear, the greater part of the mischief in this world, and the evil, as people are accustomed to call it, arises merely from the fact that men will not take the trouble to acquaint themselves with their own aim in life, or set earnestly to work to attain it when they know what it is.] They seem to me like people who have an idea that a tower is to be built, and yet expend only as much stone and work on the foundation as would suffice for a cottage. If you, feeling as you did that the bringing of your own moral nature into order was the thing most necessary for you, instead of making great and

bold sacrifices had tried to make shift as you could between these, your family, your betrothed, or perhaps your husband, you would have remained in constant contradiction with yourself and never have enjoyed a contented moment."

"You used," I replied, "the word sacrifice, and I have sometimes thought that we offer an inferior thing in sacrifice to a higher purpose, almost as if to a Divinity, even though the former may lie very near our hearts; just as we should gladly lead a favourite lamb to the altar, if by so doing we could preserve the health of a father we revered."

"Whatever it be," he answered, "judgment or feeling, that leads us to sacrifice one thing for another, or prefer one before another, decision and perseverance are in my opinion the most praiseworthy qualities in human beings. We cannot buy goods and have our money too, and the man who longs for the wares but has not the heart to sacrifice his money, is as badly off as he who repents his purchase when it is already in his hands. I am far from blaming mankind for this; it is really not their own fault, but that of the involved position in which they are, and in which they really do not know how to govern themselves. Thus for instance you will find fewer bad managers in the country than in towns; and why? Man is born to a circumscribed position: simple, defined ends, lying near at hand, he can see; and he accustoms himself to use the means which lie close to his hand; but as soon as he comes into a wider region, he knows neither what he wishes nor what he ought to do, and it is immaterial whether he is distracted by the number of different objects, or rendered beyond his own control by their grandeur and dignity. It is a misfortune to any man to be induced to strive after a thing with

which he cannot connect himself by a course of regulated activity.

"Truly," he went on, "nothing in this world is possible without earnestness, and there is on the whole very little earnestness among those whom we usually call educated people. They set about work, affairs, art, and even their very pleasures, in a self-defensive kind of fashion; they live as we read a bundle of newspapers—only in order to get through them; and speaking of this reminds me of the young Englishman in Rome who boasted one evening in society that he had got through six churches and two galleries that day. They want to know and learn a variety of things, and just those which concern them least; they do not see that snapping at the air will never satisfy hunger. When I make the acquaintance of any one my first question is: With what does he occupy himself? how, and in what order? and the answer to this question decides my interest in him for life."

"You are perhaps too strict, my dear uncle," I said, on hearing this; "and refuse many a good man help when it might be useful to him."

"And can one who has so long and so vainly worked at and for such people, be blamed for this?" he answered. "Think what sufferings a man endures in his youth, from people who believe they are inviting him to an agreeable party of pleasure, by promising to bring him into the society of the Danaïdes or Sisyphus! Thank God, I have rid myself of such people! and if unfortunately one of them happens to appear within my circle, I try in the politest manner to compliment him off again. It is from these people that you hear the bitterest complaints of the confused course of worldly affairs, the shallowness of all science, folly of artists, emptiness of

poets, and things of a like nature. It never seems to enter their minds, that just they and the multitude who resemble them, would be the last to read a book that was written as they contend it ought to be; that they are strangers to real poetry, and that even a good work of art can only gain their approval by means of prejudice. But let us break off this conversation; this is no time for scolding and murmuring."

He turned my attention to the pictures on the wall. My eyes rested on those that were especially charming, or that treated some important subject. For a time he allowed this to pass unnoticed, and then said: "Now pay a little attention to the genius that has produced these pictures. Rightly-feeling minds are fond of tracing the finger of God in nature, and why should not we bestow some consideration on the hand of His imitator?"

He then shewed me some insignificant-looking pictures, and tried to make me understand that only the history of art can give us any idea of the dignity and worth of a work of art; that we must be acquainted with the laborious steps of mere mechanism and handicraft, by which talented men have for centuries been working upwards, in order to understand how real genius can move so freely and joyfully as it does on a summit, the very sight of which makes us feel giddy.

Keeping this idea in view, he had collected a beautiful series of paintings, and as he explained their meaning to me, I could not help seeing in it a similitude of moral culture. I told him my thoughts, and he answered: "You are quite right, and we can see from this, that it is not well to strive after the cultivation of our moral nature to the exclusion of other things; we shall rather find that those whose minds especially desire this moral culture, should at the same time educate their sentient

powers, lest, by giving way to the attractions of an ill-regulated fancy, it should happen that they degrade the nobler part of their nature, taking pleasure in insipid trifles, if not in something worse, and thus slide down suddenly from their moral heights."

Though I did not in the least suspect that he was aiming at me in what he said, I felt convicted, remembering that among the hymns which had edified me, many were probably absurd and out of taste, and that the little pictures which had associated themselves with my ideas of spiritual things would scarcely have found favour in my uncle's eyes.

Philo meanwhile had been passing a great deal of time in the library, and now introduced me to it. We admired the choice as well as the multitude of books. They had been collected on the principle already spoken of: there were scarcely any which did not either furnish clear information, or point to a correct method: supply right materials or convince us of the unity of our intellect.

I had read very much in my life; indeed on certain subjects scarcely a single book was unknown to me; it was therefore all the pleasanter here to speak about the whole, and to notice gaps, where formerly I had only met with narrow-minded confusion or immeasurable latitude.

Here too we made the acquaintance of a very interesting, quiet man. He was a physician and naturalist, and seemed rather to belong to the Penates of the house than to its inhabitants. He showed us the cabinet of natural objects; this, like the library, was contained in glass cases, which ornamented the walls of the room, and enriched, without narrowing, the space which they occupied. This recalled most pleasant remembrances of

my childhood, and I showed my father many objects which he had brought to the bedside of his child, when she had scarcely taken her first look into the world. While showing us these things, as well as in the conversations which followed, the physician took no pains to hide the fact, that on the question of religious sentiment his views approached my own; at the same time he bestowed extraordinary praise on my uncle for his tolerance, and his appreciation of everything that manifested or promoted the worth and unity of human nature; admitting however, that he certainly demanded the same from others, and condemned and avoided nothing so much as individual conceit, presumption, and narrow-minded exclusiveness.

After my sister's marriage, my uncle's pleasure and satisfaction could be read in his eyes, and at different times he spoke to me about his plans for her and her children. He had some fine estates which he farmed himself, and hoped to leave to his nephews in the best order. But with regard to the smaller estate on which we were then visiting him, he seemed to entertain special intentions. "I shall leave that," he said, "to some one who can appreciate and enjoy what it contains, and who understands how much reason there is, especially in Germany, for a man of rank and wealth to set something before the world that is worthy of imitation."

The greater part of the guests had already left; we too were making ready for our departure, and imagined we had already witnessed the last scene of the festivities, when we were once more surprised by his desire to provide pleasures that really deserved our interest. At my sister's wedding we had been enchanted by the singing of an unaccompanied choir, and had openly shown our delight; indeed we had given him very clearly to understand, that we hoped he would procure

us this pleasure again, but he had seemed to take no notice. We were therefore very much surprised at his saying one evening: "The dance music has passed away; our volatile young friends have forsaken us, and even our young couple are looking graver than they did some days ago: to part at such an epoch in our lives, perhaps never—certainly not quite unchanged—to meet again, induces a solemn feeling, for which I can find no nobler food than the repetition of some music, which you once seemed to wish to hear again."

The choir had been increased, and had been quietly practising since we had heard them the first time; and now, at my uncle's wish, they gave us some music in four and eight parts, which it is not too much to say was really a foretaste of Heaven. Hitherto I had only known the pious style of singing in which good people, often with croaking voices, think that like the wood-birds they are praising God, because they feel an agreeable sensation themselves; and the vain music given at concerts, which at times carries you away in admiration of some wonderful talent, but very rarely excites even a transient feeling of real pleasure. Now, I was listening to music which had sprung from the inmost depths of first-rate human minds, and which, through the means of appointed and practised human organs singing in harmonious unity, appealed again to the deepest and best feelings of other minds, giving them in that moment a really vivid feeling of their likeness to God. The pieces they sang were all Latin hymns; when heard thus in the midst of a polished worldly society, they seemed like jewels set in a ring of gold, and, without making any pretence to be a so-called means of edification, raised my mind and made me happy in the most truly spiritual sense.

On leaving, my uncle gave us all the handsomest presents. I received from his own hands the cross of my order as *Stiftsdame*, better and more artistically wrought and enamelled than was customary. It was suspended from its ribbon by one large brilliant, which he begged me to look upon as the most precious in one of his collections.

My sister departed with her husband to his estate, and the rest of us returned to our old dwelling, seeming, as far as regarded outward circumstances, to have come back to a very common-place life. It was as if we had been taken out of a fairy palace and set down on the low flat earth; and we were obliged to make shift as best we could in our old fashion.

The remarkable experiences I had made in this new circle left a beautiful impression on my mind; but it did not last long in its original vividness, though my uncle tried to maintain and refresh it, by sending me from time to time some of his best and most pleasing works of art, and changing them for others when I had enjoyed them long enough.

I had so long been accustomed to busy myself in arranging the affairs of my own heart and mind, and talking them over with like-minded persons, that I could not study a work of art long without recurring to myself. I was accustomed to look at paintings and engravings as the letters of a book. Good print is certainly a pleasant thing, but who would take up a book merely for the sake of the print? In the same way a pictorial representation ought to say something, to teach, touch my feelings, and improve me, and my uncle might say what he would in the letters he wrote to explain his works of art—my feeling remained the same.

But outward events occurred at that time which, even

more than my own disposition, drew me away from these studies, nay, even for a season, from myself; I had to suffer and to do more, almost, than my weak powers seemed able to endure.

Until now my unmarried sister had been my right hand. Healthy, strong, and inexpressibly good-natured, she had undertaken all the housekeeping, while I devoted myself to nursing our aged father. She caught cold; it flew to her chest, and in three weeks she was lying in her coffin. Her death inflicted wounds on me, the scars of which it pains me to look at even now. Before she was buried I lay ill in bed. My old weakness at the chest seemed to have revived; I had a violent cough, and was so hoarse that I could hardly utter a sound.

The shock of this great sorrow brought my married sister to bed before her time. My poor old father was afraid he should lose not only his own children, but also the hope of further descendants, and his just and natural sorrow increased my own. I prayed to God to restore me to tolerable health; I only asked Him to spare my life until after my father's death. I recovered, and became as well as usual, so that I could perform my duties again, though in a miserable fashion.

My sister was expecting a child once more, and many anxieties usually confided to the mother in such cases, were brought to me. She and her husband were not living quite happily together; my father was not to know this; I was to be arbiter in their disputes, which was all the easier because my brother-in-law placed confidence in me, and they were both really so good; but instead of giving way to each other, they argued and disputed, so that their very desire to agree perfectly kept them always at variance. Here I learnt to handle worldly

matters in a serious spirit, and practise what till now I had only sung.

My sister had a son; and my father travelled to her notwithstanding his weak state of health. The sight of the child cheered and gladdened him incredibly, and at the christening he seemed quite enthusiastic, a thing contrary to his usual nature. I might almost say he was like a Genius with two faces: with the one he looked gladly forward into the regions he himself hoped soon to enter; with the other, at the new and hopeful earthly life which was springing up in this boy, his own descendant. On the way home he was never tired of talking to me about the child, its appearance, its health and his wish that the capabilities of this new citizen of the world might be successfully cultivated and developed. He went on talking in this way after we reached home, and it was not until some days later that we noticed a kind of fever, which came on after dinner, without shivering fits, but was rather exhausting to him. Still he did not take to his bed, but drove out every morning and attended faithfully to his official business, until at last he was prevented from doing so by grave and continuous symptoms. I shall never forget the calmness of mind, the clearness and distinctness with which—in the most regular order, as if he were transacting some one else's business—he went into his family and domestic affairs, and made arrangements for his own funeral.

With a cheerfulness not natural to him, but which now rose and increased till it became a joy full of animation, he said to me: "Where is the fear of death which I certainly used to feel? Ought I to be afraid of dying? I have a gracious God. The grave awakes no terror in me; I have an eternal life."

To recall the circumstances of his death, is one of

my most agreeable mental occupations in my present solitude, and no one will ever be able to convince me that the working of a higher Power was not visible at that solemn moment.

My dear father's death made a change in my mode of life. From the strictest obedience and the greatest restraint, I emerged into perfect freedom, and enjoyed it as we enjoy some kind of food which we have been long deprived of. Formerly I had seldom left the house for more than two hours at a time; now I seldom spent a day in my own room. My friends, to whom hitherto I had only been able to pay short and broken visits, wished to enjoy more of my company; I felt the same with regard to them; I was often asked out to dinner, drives and little pleasure-trips were planned in addition, and I never failed to make one of the party. But when the whole circle had been gone through, I saw that the priceless blessing of liberty does not consist in our being able to do everything we like, and to which we may be invited by circumstances, but in being able to do that which we think right and suitable in an honest straightforward way without let or hindrance. In the present case I was old enough to arrive at this conviction without needing to learn it by bitter experience.

What I could not renounce was the prosecution and strengthening, as soon as possible, of my connexion with the Moravian brethren, and I made haste to visit one of their nearest settlements; but here too I found by no means what I had expected. I was honest enough not to hide my opinion, and they tried to convince me that the community I was visiting was nothing in comparison with a properly constituted one. This I could consent to, feeling however, that the true spirit might just as easily manifest itself in a small as in a large establishment.

One of their bishops, a personal pupil of Count Zinzendorf, was present, and occupied himself much with me. He spoke English perfectly, and finding that I understood it a little, considered this a sign that we belonged to one another. I however thought quite the contrary: I did not find the smallest pleasure in his society. He was a cutler, a native of Moravia; his style of thought betrayed the mechanic. I got on better with a Herr von L—, who had served as Major in the French army, but I felt myself totally incapable of ever manifesting the subjection he showed towards his superiors; and indeed, when I saw his wife, and other ladies of more or less standing, kiss the bishop's hand, I felt as if I had received a box on the ear. A journey to Holland was nevertheless agreed upon; that it never took place was I am sure for my good.

A daughter was born to my sister, and now it was our turn as women to be satisfied, and to think how she should one day be educated like ourselves. My brother-in-law, on the other hand, was by no means pleased when in the next year another daughter appeared. With his large estates he wanted to see boys about him, who would some day be able to help him in managing them.

As I was very weak I kept myself quiet, and by leading a calm and tranquil life was able to retain a tolerable equilibrium. I was not afraid of death; indeed I wished to die, but I felt that God was giving me time to examine my soul and bring it nearer to Himself. During my many sleepless nights especially, I had some feelings so remarkable that I cannot describe them clearly.

It was as if my soul were thinking, unaccompanied by the body. It looked on the body as something apart from itself, much as we look on a dress. It pictured to itself with the most extraordinary vividness past times

and events, and felt what would be their results: all these times have passed away; what follows will pass too; the body will rend like a garment, but I—that well-known I—I am.

I was taught however by a very superior friend that, grand, elevated and comforting as this feeling was, I ought to indulge it as little as possible. This was the physician whose acquaintance I had made at my uncle's house, and who had informed himself very thoroughly as to the constitution both of my body and mind. He showed me that such feelings, when nourished within us independently of outward objects, undermine us to a certain extent, and sap the very foundations of our being. "Activity," he said, "is man's first destination, and he ought to employ all those intervals in which he is forced to rest, in gaining such a clear knowledge of outward things, as in its turn will facilitate his activity."

As this friend was acquainted with my habit of looking on my own body as an external object, and knew besides that I was pretty well acquainted with my own constitution, my disease and its medicinal remedies; also that by constantly suffering myself, or seeing others suffer, I had become half a physician, he drew my attention away from anatomy and drugs to the different kindred objects of creation, led me about in Paradise, as it were, and only at last, if I may carry out my comparison, allowed me from a distance to conjecture the Creator walking in the garden in the cool of the evening.

How I rejoiced now to see God in nature, feeling so sure that I had Him in my heart! How interesting the works of His hands were to me, and how thankful I was that He had willed to quicken me into life by the breath of His mouth!

We were all once more in hopes that my sister would

bring the boy into the world for which my brother-in-law was longing so earnestly. Alas, he did not live to see its birth. The brave man died of a fall from his horse, and his wife followed him, after giving birth to a beautiful boy. It made me very sad to look at her four forsaken little ones. So many healthy people gone before me, the sickly one! might I not be forced to see some of these bright hopeful blossoms fall off too? I had had enough experience in the world to know how many dangers attend a growing child, more especially in the upper classes; and it seemed to me as if these dangers had even increased since my youth. I felt too that my own weak health would allow me to do little or nothing for the children, and was therefore very glad to hear that my uncle had resolved, as might naturally have been expected from his character, to devote his whole care and attention to the bringing-up of these charming little creatures. And certainly they deserved it in every sense: they were beautiful children, and though very different, they all gave promise of growing up to be good and sensible men and women.

Since my kind physician had drawn my attention to likenesses in families, I had become fond of noticing them among the children and my relations. My father had carefully preserved the portraits of his ancestors, and had had his own and his children's likenesses painted by tolerable masters. Neither had my mother and her family been forgotten. We knew the characters of the different members of the family perfectly, and as we had often compared them with each other, we now tried to discover both mental and bodily likenesses to them in the children. The eldest boy seemed to be like his grandfather on the father's side, of whom my uncle possessed a very good picture, painted in his youth. Like his grandfather too,

who had always proved himself a brave officer, the boy cared for nothing so much as a gun, and always occupied himself with one when he came to see me. For my father had left behind him a very fine collection of fire-arms, and nothing would content the child until I had given him a pair of pistols and a fowling-piece, and he had found out how to manage a German gun-lock. But neither his actions nor character were in the least degree rough; on the contrary, he was gentle and reasonable.

The eldest girl took my fancy completely, perhaps because she resembled me, and of all the four children was the most attached to me. But I can truly say that the more I watched her as she grew up, the more she put me to shame, and I could not see the child without a feeling of admiration, I may almost say, of respect. It would be difficult to find a nobler face and form, a calmer mind or an activity so equable and so entirely unrestricted to any one object. She was never idle for a moment, and every occupation seemed to gain dignity in her hands. If she could only do what was right and fitting for the time and place, everything else seemed indifferent to her, and when there was nothing to be done she could be quiet without showing any impatience. Such activity, without desire for an occupation, I have never seen in my life before or since. Her conduct towards the poor and distressed was inimitable, even from her childhood. I am ready to confess that I never possessed the talent of making a business of benevolence. I was not niggardly to the poor; indeed, I often gave away more than I could afford; but it was to a certain extent as if I bought myself off by doing so, and my real care and attention were only bestowed on those who were related to me. What I have to praise in my niece is exactly the contrary of this. I never saw her give money

to the poor, and what she received from me for that purpose was always transformed at once into something which they needed urgently. She never seemed to me more charming than when she was ransacking my wardrobe and linen-press; she was sure to find something which I never wore or could not use; and to cut these old things to pieces and make them up again to fit some ragged child was her greatest delight.

Her sister's disposition soon proved to be quite different. She had much of her mother, promised even at an early age to be very pretty and graceful, and seemed likely to fulfil the promise. Her exterior occupies her a great deal, and she has long known how to make her dress and appearance attractive. I still remember the rapture with which, when quite a little child, she looked at herself in the glass after making me fasten round her neck some beautiful pearls belonging to my late mother, which she had found among my things.

As I watched the different tendencies of these children it was pleasant to me to think how, after my death, my various possessions would be divided among them, and rise into a new life by their means. I saw my father's fowling-piece wandering across the fields, slung over my nephew's shoulder, and the birds being emptied out of his game-bag. I saw my entire wardrobe coming out of church at the Easter confirmation, fitted to the figures of little girls, and my best dresses and shawls ornamenting a modest bride out of the middle class on her wedding-day. For to fit out such children and poor but honest girls was Natalie's great delight, though I must say, at the same time, that she never betrayed any kind of love, or, if I may so express myself, seemed to feel the need of an attachment to any being, seen or unseen, such as I had shown so strongly in my own early days.

Then, when I thought how, on the same day, her younger sister would wear my pearls and jewels at court, I could see my possessions returning to their elements again with the same calmness with which I could look forward to the dissolution of my body.

The children are growing fast, and to my great satisfaction are healthy, beautiful and brave. I endure the fact that my uncle keeps them at a distance from me, patiently; I see them seldom, even when they are in the neighbourhood or in the town itself.

A remarkable man, who, though no one is properly informed as to his previous history, is believed to be a French ecclesiastic, has entire control over the children; they are brought up in different places, and boarded sometimes at one place, sometimes at another.

At first I could discover no plan in this education, but my physician explained to me that the Abbé had convinced my uncle, if anything were ever to be effected in the education of a human being, the direction and tendency of his wishes and inclinations must first be discovered. He must then be placed in a position in which he can attain the former and gratify the latter as soon as possible, so that if he should have erred, he may become aware of his error before it be too late; and when he has found what really suits him, may cling to it all the more determinately, and work at his further improvement with all the greater diligence. I hope this strange experiment may succeed; with such promising dispositions it may perhaps be possible.

But what I cannot approve of in these tutors is their endeavour to keep the children from everything that can lead to intercourse with themselves and with their invisible and only faithful Friend. I often feel grieved that my uncle thinks me dangerous for the children. After

all, in real life no one is tolerant! Even those who protest that every one ought to be free to act as he chooses, try to exclude those from action who do not think as they do.

This method of keeping the children at a distance from me distresses me all the more, the more thoroughly I am convinced of the reality of my belief. If it proves itself so efficacious in actual life, surely it must have a Divine origin and a real object! It is practical life that first makes us certain of our own existence, and why should not we take the same method, to convince ourselves of the existence of that Being who is the Giver of all good?

That I go forward on my way and not backward—that my actions approach more and more nearly to that idea of perfection which I have formed in my own mind—that, notwithstanding my body, from its weakness, refuses me so many services, I still find it easier every day to do what I think right:—can human nature, a nature into whose corruption I have had so deep an insight, account for this? Certainly not, at least to my own mind.

I scarcely remember a command; nothing appears to me in the character of a law; it is an impulse that guides and leads me in the right way. I follow my own inclinations freely, and know as little of restraint as of repentance. God be thanked that I know to Whom I owe this blessing, and that I dare not think of it otherwise than with humility! For having once clearly seen what a fearful monster can be begotten and nourished in every human heart, unless preserved and defended by a Higher Power, I can never fall into the danger of feeling pride in my own ability or strength.

BOOK VII

CHAPTER I.

SPRING had come in all its glory. An unseasonably early thunder-storm that had been threatening all day, came down violently on the hills, the rain passed away over the country, the sun burst out in his fullest brightness, and on a dark-grey background appeared the glorious rainbow. As Wilhelm rode towards it he gazed on it sadly, and said to himself: "Must the loveliest and sweetest colours of our lives always appear on dark backgrounds? Must the rain-drops fall if we are to be charmed and delighted? There would be no difference between a bright day and a grey one, if the former did not move us by its beauty; and what is more able to touch us than the silent hope that our inborn longings will not always remain unsatisfied? We are moved by the story of a noble deed and by the sight of anything harmonious, because in seeing and hearing these things, we feel that we draw nearer to the home towards which all our highest and best thoughts and feelings are impatiently struggling."

Meanwhile a foot-passenger had overtaken and joined him; the stranger kept pace with Wilhelm's horse, and after a few indifferent remarks said: "If I do not mistake, I have seen you somewhere before."

"I remember you too," replied Wilhelm. "Were not we together once at a merry water-party?"

"Quite right," said the other.

Wilhelm looked at him more narrowly, and after a

short silence said: "I don't know what alteration has taken place in you. When we met last I took you for a Lutheran country clergyman, but now I should say you were a Roman Catholic one."

"This time at all events you are not mistaken," said the other, taking off his hat so as to shew the tonsure. "What has become of your party? Did you stay together long?"

"Longer than I ought to have done; for I am sorry to say that on looking back at the time we passed together, it seems a perfect blank; nothing remains behind."

"There you are wrong," said the stranger; "everything that happens to us leaves some trace behind; everything contributes imperceptibly to form our characters. But there lies some danger in trying to take a too strict account of this. It has the effect of making us either proud and idle, or depressed and faint-hearted—the one state of mind as full of hindrances for our future as the other. The safest plan is, always to do what lies nearest to us, and that just now," he continued with a smile, "is to reach our quarters as quickly as we can."

Wilhelm asked how far it was to Lothario's estate. The other replied that it lay on the further side of the hill. "Perhaps I may see you there," he said. "I have only a little matter to do in the neighbourhood. Farewell, then, till we meet again!" And so saying he turned off up a steep path which seemed to lead more directly across the hill.

"Yes, yes; he is quite right," said Wilhelm to himself as he rode on. "We ought to think of the next thing we have to do, and that with me just now can be nothing else than the sad commission I have to execute."

Let me see whether I remember the speech which is to shame Aurelia's cruel lover."

He began repeating this artistic effort to himself; not one syllable had he forgotten; and the clearer his memory, the higher and stronger waxed his courage and passionate feeling. Aurelia's sufferings and death were vividly present to his mind.

"Spirit of my friend!" he cried, "be near me! and if such a thing be possible, give me a token that you are calmed and appeased."

While thinking and speaking thus, he had reached the top of the hill, and now saw on the slope beneath him, a strange building, which he thought at once must be Lothario's abode. The original erection seemed to have consisted of an old, irregular, turreted and gabled castle, but the new buildings which had been added on to this were still more irregular, and lay, some near, some at a distance from the central building, connected with it by galleries and covered passages. All outward symmetry, all architectural effect seemed to have been sacrificed to a desire for interior comfort. There was no trace of moat or rampart, of artificially laid-out flower-garden or long avenue. A kitchen-garden and orchard came up close to the house, and even the small spaces between the different parts of the building had been turned into useful little gardens. A cheerful village lay at some distance, and both fields and gardens seemed to be in the best possible condition.

Absorbed in his own passionate reflections, Wilhelm rode on without spending much thought on what he saw, put up his horse at an inn, and hastened to the castle in some little agitation.

He was received at the door by an old man-servant, who said in a good-natured way that he was afraid there

was little chance of his being admitted to the master that day, as he had a great many letters to write, and had already sent away some of his own people. Wilhelm however grew more urgent, and at last the old man was obliged to give way and announce him. He came back and took Wilhelm into a large old hall, begging him to have a little patience, as his master might not be able to come for some time. Wilhelm paced restlessly up and down the room, now and then throwing a glance at the knights and ladies whose ancient portraits hung round him on the walls. He went over the beginning of his speech again, and thought it had never seemed so suitable as in the presence of those coats of mail and ruffs. At the slightest sound he put himself in the proper attitude for receiving his opponent with dignity, handing him the letter, and then attacking him with the weapons of reproach.

He had been disappointed several times, and was really beginning to feel annoyed and out of humour, when a handsome man dressed in a plain great-coat and riding-boots entered from a side-door. "What good news have you to give me?" he said in a kind tone to Wilhelm. "Pardon me for having made you wait so long."

As he spoke he folded the letter he held in his hand. Wilhelm, in some embarrassment, gave him Aurelia's letter, saying: "I bring you the last words of a friend, which you will not be able to read unmoved."

Lothario took the letter and went back at once to his room, where, through the open door, Wilhelm could clearly see him seal and address some more letters and then open Aurelia's. He seemed to read it over two or three times, and Wilhelm, though feeling that the pathetic speech he had prepared did not suit very well

with the natural and unaffected way in which he had been received, still took courage, stepped to the threshold, and was just on the point of beginning, when a door in the wall of the cabinet opened and the priest entered.

"I have just received the strangest despatch in the world," exclaimed Lothario to him as he came in. "I hope you will excuse me," he went on, turning to Wilhelm, "if at this moment I am not in a mood for further conversation. You will stay here to-night, and, Abbé, you will take care that our guest is properly cared for."

So saying, Lothario bowed to Wilhelm; the Abbé took him by the hand, and he was obliged, though reluctantly, to follow.

They passed in silence through strange passages and reached a very pretty room. The Abbé led him in, and went away without further apology. Soon after, a brisk, sprightly boy appeared, announced himself as Wilhelm's attendant and brought him his supper, entertaining him as he waited at table with an account of the regulations of the house, the usual hours for breakfast, dinner, work and recreation, with a great deal besides, and much especial praise of Lothario.

Still, pleasant as the boy was, Wilhelm tried to get rid of him as soon as possible. He wanted to be alone, feeling excessively oppressed and embarrassed by his present position. He reproached himself for having fulfilled his intentions imperfectly, and only half executed his errand. One moment he would determine to make amends for all he had omitted the next morning, and the next would become aware that in Lothario's presence he should not feel as he did then. The house too in which he was staying, seemed so strange; his present position puzzled and perplexed him. Before undressing he opened his travelling-bag, and with his night-clothes

brought out the ghost's veil which Mignon had packed up with them. The sight of this veil increased his melancholy mood. "Fly, young man, fly!" he exclaimed. "What can be the meaning of these mysterious words? the ghost would have done far better if he had told me to turn back into myself." He looked at the framed English engravings on the walls; most of them he passed over with indifference, but at last came upon one representing a shipwreck: a father with his two daughters were awaiting their death from the waves which were pouring into the ship. One of the two daughters seemed to resemble his fair horsewoman; an unspeakable compassion took possession of our friend; he felt an irresistible desire to give vent to his feelings, tears forced their way into his eyes, and he could not recover his calmness until overpowered by sleep.

Strange dreams came to him towards morning. He fancied himself in a garden which he had often visited as a boy, and was delighted at seeing the well-known walks, hedges and flower-beds again. He met Mariana there, and talked affectionately to her without any recollection of past disagreements. His father came up to them in his usual every-day dress, and in a kind familiar way, very unusual with him, told his son to bring two chairs out of the summer-house, took Mariana by the hand and led her to an arbour.

Wilhelm ran to the summer-house: it was empty, but Aurelia was standing at the opposite window; he went up to speak to her, but she did not move, and though he went and stood beside her he could not see her face. He looked out of the window and saw a number of people together in a strange garden; some of them he knew; Frau Melina was sitting under a tree, playing with a rose which she held in her hand; Laertes stood by her,

counting gold pieces from one hand into the other; Mignon and Felix lay on the grass, the former on her back, the latter on his face; Philine came up and clapped her hands over the children; Mignon did not stir, but Felix jumped up and ran away from her. At first he laughed, as Philine ran after him, but when the Harper began to follow him with long, slow steps, he screamed in terror. The child ran straight towards a pond; Wilhelm hastened after him; it was too late, the child lay in the water. Wilhelm stood as if rooted to the spot. Suddenly he saw the beautiful Amazon standing on the other side of the pond; she stretched her right hand towards the child and walked along the bank; the child passed through the water in a straight line towards her finger, and followed her as she walked; at last she put out her hand and drew him out of the pond. Meanwhile Wilhelm had come nearer; the child was burning all over, and drops of fire were falling from him. Wilhelm was more anxious than before, but the Amazon quickly took a white veil off her head and threw it over the child. The fire was extinguished directly. She lifted the veil: two boys sprang forth and played about merrily, while Wilhelm and his fair horsewoman paced the garden hand in hand; in the distance he saw his father and Mariana walking in an avenue of tall trees which seemed to run round the whole garden; he turned his steps towards them, and was crossing the garden with his beautiful companion, when suddenly the fair-haired Friedrich stepped in their way and detained them by all sorts of tricks and laughter. They nevertheless persisted in pursuing their path, and he ran off to the other couple who were to be seen in the distance; his father and Mariana seemed to flee from him; he ran the faster, and Wilhelm saw

them almost flying along the avenue. Natural feeling and inclination called on him to go to their help, but the hand of his fair companion held him back. How gladly he allowed himself to be thus detained! With these mingled feelings he awoke, and found the sun shining brightly into his room.

CHAPTER II.

THE page called Wilhelm to breakfast; he found the Abbé already in the hall; Lothario, they said, had gone out on horseback. The Abbé was not in a talkative mood; he seemed disposed to reflection, asked about Aurelia's death, and listened with interest to Wilhelm's sad story. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "any man who has clearly presented to his own mind the endless operations which have to be gone through by nature and art, before a formed and cultivated human being can be produced, and who is taking part in the cultivation of his own race as far as he can, may well nigh be brought to despair at seeing the foolish and sinful way in which people destroy themselves or (sometimes by their own, sometimes by another's fault) place themselves in a position to be destroyed by their fellows. When I think of this, life itself seems such an uncertain blessing, that I feel inclined to praise every one who does not set too high a value upon it."

He had scarcely finished speaking when the door was violently flung open, and a young girl rushed in, pushing away the old man-servant who tried to keep her back. She went straight up to the Abbé, seized his arm, and with sobs and tears, which almost prevented her from speaking, cried: "Where is he? where have you put

him? it is a horrible piece of treachery! Only confess! I know what is going on! I will follow him! I *will* know where he is!"

"Compose yourself, my child," said the Abbé with assumed calmness. "Come to your room and you shall hear everything; only if I am to tell you, you must be able to listen."

He offered his hand to lead her away.

"I shall not go to my room," she cried; "I hate the very walls where you have kept me prisoner so long. But I have heard everything—the Colonel has sent him a challenge, he has gone out on horseback to seek his antagonist, and perhaps at this very moment—yes, indeed, it seems to me as if I had heard shots more than once. Have the horses put in directly and drive with me, or I'll fill the house, nay, the whole village, with my cries."

She rushed to the window in a passion of tears; the Abbé held her back and tried to calm her, but in vain.

She heard the sound of wheels; she flung the window open, crying, "He is dead, they are bringing him home!"

"He is getting out," said the Abbé, "you see he is alive."

"But he is wounded," she answered passionately, "or he would have come on horseback. There, they are leading him; he is dangerously wounded."

She darted out of the room and down the stairs; the Abbé hastened after her, and Wilhelm followed them; he saw the meeting between this girl and the man she loved so much as Lothario came up the stairs.

He was leaning on his companion; in the latter Wilhelm at once recognised his old patron Jarno. Lothario spoke kindly and tenderly to the disconsolate girl, and supported himself on her too as he slowly came up the

steps. He said good-morning to Wilhelm as he passed, and was led into his own room.

Not long after, Jarno came out of this room and went up to Wilhelm. "You seem fated," he said, "to meet with actors and theatres wherever you go; we are just now in the middle of a drama which has rather more of tragedy than comedy in it."

"I am very glad," said Wilhelm, "to find you again just at this strange moment. I am surprised and frightened, and your presence calms and quiets me. Tell me, is there any danger? is the Baron seriously wounded?"

"I believe not," said Jarno.

Some time later the young surgeon came out of the room. "Well, what do you say now?" cried Jarno.

"That there is great danger," replied the other, putting some instruments into his leather bag.

Wilhelm looked at the ribbon hanging from this bag. Bright, contradictory colours, a strange pattern and curious figures wrought in gold and silver, distinguished this ribbon from all other ribbons in the world. Wilhelm felt convinced that the instrument-case belonging to the old surgeon who had dressed his wounds in the wood, was lying before his eyes, and the hope of coming at last on some trace of his fair horsewoman flashed through his whole being like a flame of fire.

"Where did you get that bag?" he exclaimed. "Whose was it before it came into your possession? Pray tell me!"

"I bought it at a sale," replied the other; "what do I care whose it was?" and so saying he went away.

"If one could only believe a single word that comes out of that young fellow's mouth," said Jarno.

"Then he did not really buy the bag?" said Wilhelm.

"Just as little as there is any danger about Lothario's wound," replied Jarno.

Wilhelm was standing absorbed in many and different thoughts when Jarno asked him how he had fared since they last met. Wilhelm gave him an outline of his history, and when he came to speak of Aurelia's death and his present errand, Jarno exclaimed: "It is strange, really very strange!"

The Abbé came out of Lothario's room, beckoned to Jarno to take his place, and said to Wilhelm: "The Baron begs that you will remain here for a few days as an addition to our party, and assist in entertaining him under the present circumstances. If you wish to write to your friends, your letter shall be sent at once, and in order that you may understand the strange event of which you have been an eye-witness I must tell you what in fact is no secret. The Baron had a little adventure with a lady which made more noise than it need have done, from her excessive eagerness to enjoy the triumph of having snatched him from a rival. Sad to say, he ceased after a time to find pleasure in her society, and avoided her; a fate which her passionate temperament prevented her from bearing quietly and courageously. At a ball they came to an open rupture; she considered herself grievously insulted and wished to be revenged. No cavalier however came to take up her cause until her husband, from whom she had long been separated, heard of the story; he took her part, challenged the Baron, and to-day has wounded him; but I hear that the Colonel himself has fared even worse than his opponent."

From that moment our friend was treated in the house as if he were one of the family.

CHAPTER III.

AT times the patient was read aloud to, and it gave Wilhelm pleasure to perform this little service. Lydia never left the bedside; her care for him swallowed up every other thought; but to-day Lothario himself seemed absent, and begged that the reading might be discontinued.

"I am so impressed to-day," he said, "with the foolish manner in which we allow time to slip by. How many plans I have made, meditated on and contrived, and yet how one lingers over one's best resolutions! I have been looking over the proposed alterations on my property, and I can truly say that on their account I am especially glad that the bullet did not take a more dangerous course."

Lydia looked at him tenderly with tears in her eyes, as if she would say: "Had she then, had his friends, no right to claim any share in his joy at being still alive?" Jarno on the contrary replied: "Such alterations as you propose ought to be considered from every point of view before they are resolved on."

"Lengthy deliberations," said Lothario, "generally prove that people have lost sight of the principal point under discussion; over-hasty action, that they are entirely ignorant of it. I can see very clearly, that in many points in the management of my property I cannot dispense with the services of my people, and that there are certain rights due to me on which I must rigorously insist; but I see too that there are others, which, though advantageous, are not so indispensable to me that I need grudge my dependents some of the benefit arising from

them. We do not always lose what we give up. Am not I drawing more profit out of the land than my father did, and is not my income from it increasing? Ought I to enjoy these increasing profits alone? Ought I to grudge the man who is working with me and for me, his share in the advantages offered by extended knowledge and times of progress?"

"Tis human nature," exclaimed Jarno; "and I do not blame myself when I detect the same peculiarity in my own actions. People like to engross everything to themselves, in order to do what they like with it. We seldom think money well spent that was not laid out by ourselves."

"Yes," said Lothario, "we could spare a good deal from our capital, if we were not so arbitrary in our disposal of the interest."

"The only thing I have to remind you of," said Jarno, "and on account of which I cannot advise you just now to make alterations which involve temporary loss, is that you are still in debt; and the payment of these debts must straiten you. I should advise you to defer your plan until you are entirely free."

"And in the meantime leave it to the mercy of a bullet or a loose tile to annihilate the results of my life and work for ever! Oh, my friend!" Lothario went on, "that is one of the great faults of cultivated people; they will sacrifice everything for an idea, little or nothing for a positive object. Why did I run into debt? Why did I quarrel with my uncle, and leave my brothers and sisters so long alone? All for the sake of an idea! In America I fancied I should be able to do some good work—fancied that beyond the sea I was wanted and could be useful; any enterprise that was not surrounded by danger seemed poor and mean in my eyes. Ah! how differently

I look at things now! how important and precious everything seems that lies close at hand."

"I well remember the letter I received from beyond the sea," said Jarno. "You wrote 'I am coming back, to say in my own house, under the trees of my own orchard, and in the midst of my own people: *here or nowhere is America!*'"

"Yes, my friend, and I say so still, though as I say it I blame myself for being less active here than there. For a certain kind of unvarying, continuous present, mere understanding is sufficient; and we ourselves become so completely made up of this faculty that we fail to perceive the extraordinary which is demanded of us by every common-place day, or when we do recognise it find a thousand excuses for evading its performance. A man of sense and understanding is worth much to himself, but for the world as a whole he is of little value."

"Well," said Jarno, "instead of depreciating understanding, we had better confess that extraordinary actions are very often foolish ones."

"Just because people do them in an irregular way. My brother-in-law, for instance, is giving as much of his property as he has a right to alienate, to the Moravians, in the belief that by so doing he is furthering the salvation of his soul; if instead of this, he had sacrificed a small portion of his income, he might have made a number of people happy, and created a little heaven upon earth for them and for himself. Our sacrifices are seldom active; we renounce at once whatever we give away; and abandon our possessions, not because we have determined to do so, but in desperation. During the last few days I confess the Count's image has been continually hovering before me, and I am firmly resolved to do from conviction what he is being driven to by a timorous delusion;

I will not wait for my recovery. Here are the papers; they only want putting in order. Get the lawyer to help you, and our friend here will do his part. You are as well acquainted with the matter as I am, and whether I recover or die I shall abide by my resolution and say: Here or nowhere is Herrnhut!"

When Lydia heard him speak of dying, she flung herself down at his bedside, holding his hands and weeping bitterly. The surgeon came in, Jarno gave Wilhelm the papers and obliged Lydia to leave the room.

"For Heaven's sake!" said Wilhelm, when they were alone in the old hall, "what is all this about the Count? What Count is it that is going to join the Moravians?"

"One you know well enough," replied Jarno. "You are the ghost who scared him into the arms of piety; you are the reprobate who brought his charming wife into such a state of mind, that she finds it endurable to follow her husband."

"And she is Lothario's sister?" exclaimed Wilhelm.

"The very same."

"And Lothario knows—?"

"Everything."

"O let me fly!" said Wilhelm. "How can I ever stand before his face again? What can he say?"

"That no man should cast a stone at his neighbour, or make long speeches to put other people to shame unless he is ready to spout them before a looking-glass."

"What! you know that too?"

"Yes, and a thing or two besides," replied Jarno with a smile, "but this time," he went on, "I shall not let you escape so easily as you did before, but you need not be afraid of my bounty-money now. I have left the army, and even when I was in it you need not have

suspected me of such things. Since I saw you last, however, many things have changed. After the death of my Prince, who was my only friend and benefactor, I gave up society and all my worldly connexions. I was fond of promoting whatever was sensible and wise, and people were always talking about my restless troublesome head and sharp tongue. The common herd are more afraid of good sense than of anything else; they ought to be frightened at stupidity, if they knew the meaning of the word frightful; but good sense is inconvenient: that must be got rid of at once; stupidity is only ruinous, men can let that bide its time. Be that as it may, however, I've got to live, and you shall hear more of my plans; indeed, you can take a share in them, if you like; but now tell me how it has fared with you? I see and feel that you are altered too. What has become of your old whim for producing something beautiful and good in the company of gipsies?"

"I have been well punished," cried Wilhelm. "Don't remind me of the people I have come from and must return to. We hear a good deal about the theatre, but no one who has not been on the stage himself can form any conception of what it really is. You can have no idea how totally ignorant of themselves these people are, how unreflectingly they do their work, and what extravagant pretensions they make. Each actor wants not only to be the chief, but the only one; he would be glad to exclude all the rest, not perceiving that even in concert with them he can scarcely accomplish anything. Every one of them fancies himself a perfect marvel of originality, when in reality he cannot understand anything that is at all out of the beaten track; and yet he is perpetually hankering after something new. And then how bitterly they oppose one another! it is only the

pettiest self-love, and the most narrow-minded self-interest that can bring them together. Of any kind of mutual politeness there's not the faintest shade; on the contrary, they keep up an unceasing atmosphere of suspicion, by all sorts of spiteful tricks and scandalous speeches. Their lives are either immoral or simply absurd. Every one of them lays claim to the most unqualified respect, and is offended by the slightest blame. 'He knew that well enough already,' he will say. Then why has he always done the contrary? Never satisfied, always suspicious, it seems as if they feared nothing so much as reason and good taste, and sought nothing so eagerly as to maintain the royal prerogatives of their own arbitrary self-will."

Wilhelm drew breath in order to proceed with his lity, but an immoderate burst of laughter from Jarno interrupted him. "Those poor actors!" he exclaimed, throwing himself into a chair and continuing to laugh; "those poor dear actors! Do you know, my friend," he went on, after having recovered himself a little, ["you have not been describing the theatre, but the world;"] I could find you plenty of figures and actions out of all classes to suit your severe pencil. Excuse me, but I really cannot help laughing at your belief that all these delightful qualities were confined to the stage."

Wilhelm controlled his feelings, for really Jarno's ungovernable and unseasonable laughter had nettled him. "You are only giving vent to your misanthropy," he said, "when you contend that such faults are universal."

["And you are showing your ignorance of the world when you reckon such things as especially bad among actors. I must say that, in an actor, I can forgive every fault that springs from self-delusion and a desire to

please; for if he does not *seem* something to himself and to the world, he *is* nothing. His vocation is to seem what he is not; he must set a high value on passing, momentary applause, for it is his only reward; he must try to make a brilliant appearance, he is there for no other purpose.”

“Now,” said Wilhelm, “you must let me have a smile at least on my side. I should never have believed that you could be so just and tolerant.”

“No, by Heaven! I am perfectly serious; I mean all I say. I can excuse every human weakness in an actor, but actors’ weaknesses I can never forgive in men. There, you had better not set me going on that theme; my lamentations would be even fiercer than yours.”

The surgeon came out of Lothario’s room; on their asking after his patient, he answered in the most cheerful, friendly tone, “He is going on very well indeed, I hope we shall soon see him quite restored to health,” and hurried away, without waiting for the eager question about the instrument-bag, which was on the point of issuing from Wilhelm’s half-opened lips. His anxiety to learn something more about his fair horsewoman gave him a feeling of confidence in Jarno; he told him the whole story, and asked his assistance. “You know so much,” he said, “you will surely be able to learn this too?”

Jarno thought a moment, and then said to his young friend: “Don’t disturb yourself, and don’t give a hint of this to any one else. We shall be sure to trace your fair one before long. But just now I am feeling very anxious about Lothario; the surgeon’s cheerful friendly tone is a proof that there is danger. I should like to get Lydia out of the way, if I only knew how to manage

it; she does no good here. To-night I hope our old physician will arrive, and then we'll have another consultation."

CHAPTER IV.

THE physician came. It was the good old little doctor whom we know already, and whom we have to thank for the interesting manuscript. His first care was to visit the wounded man, with whose condition he seemed by no means satisfied. After this, he had a long interview with Jarno, to the subject of which, however, they neither of them alluded on appearing at the supper-table.

Wilhelm met him very warmly, and asked after the Harper. "We've still some hopes of bringing the unfortunate man round," replied the doctor.

"That man was a melancholy addition to the narrow, singular kind of life you were leading," said Jarno. "What happened to him afterwards? I should like to know."

When they had satisfied Jarno's curiosity, the doctor went on: "I never saw a mind in such a remarkable condition before. For many years he has not taken the slightest interest in things outside of himself; indeed he has scarcely noticed them; wrapt up in his own thoughts, he has contemplated nothing but his own hollow empty *ego*, which seemed to him a fathomless abyss. It was most affecting to hear him speak of this sad condition. 'I can see nothing before me, nothing behind me,' he would say, 'but one endless night; myself in its midst, in the most fearful solitude. All feeling but the feeling of my guilt has left me, and this only looms behind me

like a distant, shapeless spectre. And yet in this night there is neither height nor depth—neither behind nor before; there is no word for such a changeless state. Sometimes, in the anguish of this monotony, I cry out passionately: Forever! Forever! and even this strange and incomprehensible word shows bright and clear against the darkness of my condition. No Divine ray appears to me in this night; all my tears are shed to myself and for myself. The most cruel things for me are friendship and love, for they are the only ones that tempt me to wish that the appearances surrounding me might prove to be realities. But these two phantoms, like the others, have only risen out of the abyss to torment me, and to rob me at last even of the precious consciousness of this vast existence.'

"You should hear him," the doctor continued, "when he is unburdening his heart in moments of privacy. I have been deeply affected while listening to him. If anything forces him for a moment to acknowledge that a portion of time has passed, he seemed astounded, and then rejects such a change in things as only another phase of the appearances. One evening he sang a song about his grey hair, and we all sat round him in tears."

"Oh, cannot you get it for me?" exclaimed Wilhelm.

"But have not you discovered anything about what he calls his crime?" said Jarno; "or the reason of his odd way of dressing, his conduct at the fire and the furious anger he showed towards the child?"

"We can only form conjectures about his history; it is against our principle to ask direct questions. As we saw that he had been brought up in the Catholic faith we thought confession might afford him some relief, but he withdraws in a remarkable way whenever we try to bring him in contact with the priest. However, not to

leave your desire to know something about him entirely unsatisfied, I will tell you at least our own suppositions on the matter. His youth was passed in the church; probably the reason for his retention of his long beard and cloak. The joy of love seems to have remained unknown to him for the greater part of his life; but at a later age some error committed with a woman very nearly related to him, and her death in consequence of the birth of an unfortunate little creature, seem to have turned his brain.

"His greatest delusion is that he brings misfortune wherever he goes, and that death is awaiting him from the hand of an innocent boy. Until he knew that she was a girl, he was afraid of Mignon; then Felix became a cause of terror to him, and as, notwithstanding his misery, he has an intense love of life, this seems to have caused his aversion to the child."

"But what hopes of his improvement have you?" said Wilhelm.

"It advances slowly," said the physician, "but still it does advance. He goes on with his fixed occupations, and we have accustomed him to read the newspapers; he looks for them quite eagerly now."

"I am curious to see his songs," said Jarno.

"I can give you several," said the doctor. "The clergyman's eldest son, who is accustomed to write down his father's sermons, has jotted down many a stanza without the old man's perceiving it, and so by degrees strung several songs together."

The next morning Jarno came to Wilhelm, saying: "We want you to do us a favour. Lydia must be got rid of for a time; her vehement—indeed, I may say, her inconvenient and unseasonable—love and passion are a hindrance to the Baron's recovery. His constitution is

so good that there is no danger, but still the wound requires rest and tranquillity. You see how Lydia torments him by her impetuous attentions, irrepressible anxiety, and unceasing tears. In short—" he added, after pausing a moment, with a smile, "the doctor expressly desires that she shall leave the house for a time. We have made her believe that a lady, who is an intimate friend of hers, is staying in the neighbourhood, wishes to see her and is expecting her every moment. She has consented to go over to the lawyer's, about two hours' drive from here. He has received his instructions, and will regret extremely that Fräulein Therese has just started on her journey. He will make it seem probable that she could still be overtaken, Lydia will hasten after her, and, if fortune stands our friend, can be led on from one place to another. If she at last insists on turning back, she ought not to be contradicted; advantage must be taken of the night, the coachman is a clever fellow, and the matter must be planned with him beforehand. We want you to take a seat in the carriage, amuse her, and undertake the direction of the whole affair."

"You are giving me a very strange and doubtful commission," said Wilhelm. "The sight of wounded, faithful love is one of the most painfully distressing things; and I am to be the instrument of wounding it! It will be the first time in my life that I have ever deceived any one in this fashion; for I have always believed that if we once began to deceive, even for the sake of what was good and useful, we might be led too far."

"And yet we cannot train children in any other way," replied Jarno.

"With children it may be allowable," said Wilhelm,

“because we love them so tenderly, and without question overlook many things in them; but with equals, in whose behalf our own hearts do not always plead so loudly, it might often be dangerous. But do not think,” he went on, after a short pause of thought, “that I mean to decline the task on this account. I have such a reverence for your understanding, such a liking for your delightful friend, and such a wish to assist his recovery by every possible means, that I am willing to forget myself. It is not enough to be able to risk your life for a friend; in case of necessity we must be able to deny our convictions for him. We ought to sacrifice our favourite passion, our dearest wishes, for his sake. I will undertake the task, though even beforehand I see what I shall have to suffer from Lydia’s tears,—from her despair.”

“But on the other hand,” replied Jarno, “the reward that awaits you in making the acquaintance of Fräulein Therese is by no means small; there are few women like her. She would put many a man to shame; I might say of her that she is a real Amazon, while others are only going about like pretty Hermaphrodites in that ambiguous dress.”

Wilhelm was struck; he thought Therese might prove to be his fair horsewoman, especially as on his asking for further information Jarno broke off the conversation and went away.

The new, near hope of seeing that revered and beloved form again, produced the strangest emotions. He began to look at his errand as the work of an especial providence, and the thought that he was going, by the most insidious means, to take a poor girl away from the object of her sincerest, most passionate love, only crossed his mind like the shadow of a bird flying over the sunlit earth.

The carriage was at the door; Lydia hesitated a moment before entering it. "Remember me to your master again," she said to the old servant; "I shall be back before night;" and she looked back once more with tears in her eyes as they were driving away. Then turning to Wilhelm she said: "You will find Fräulein Therese a very interesting person. I wonder what brings her into this neighbourhood; you probably know that she and the Baron once loved one another passionately. Notwithstanding the distance, Lothario went often to see her; I was with her at that time, and it seemed to me as if they only lived, and meant to live, for one another. All at once however it came to grief, and no one could tell why. He had made my acquaintance, and I do not deny that I envied Therese heartily, hardly concealed my admiration, and by no means repelled him when he suddenly seemed to choose me instead of her. She behaved as well to me as I could possibly have wished; though it must almost have looked as if I had robbed her of such a precious lover. But oh! how many tears—how much pain this love has cost me already! At first we used to meet secretly at some place of *rendezvous*; but I could not endure that kind of life long. I was only happy in his presence, but then quite happy! Away from him my eyes were never dry, my pulse was never calm. Once he stayed away for several days, and I was in such despair that I set out and surprised him here; he received me affectionately, and if this unfortunate affair had not interfered, I should have led a heavenly life; but since he has been in danger and suffering I cannot say what I have endured; indeed I reproach myself bitterly at this moment, for having been capable of leaving him even for a single day."

Wilhelm was just going to ask some further particulars

about Therese when they stopped before the lawyer's house. He came out to the carriage, regretting grievously that Fräulein Therese had already started; and though he asked the travellers to stay and take refreshment, he observed, at the same time, that they might overtake her carriage in the next village. They resolved on doing so; the coachman did not linger on the way, and they passed several villages, without however overtaking any one. Lydia then insisted on returning; the coachman drove on as though he did not understand her. At last she demanded it so impetuously, that Wilhelm called to him and gave the preconcerted signal. The coachman answered that it was not necessary to go back by the road they had come: he knew a quicker and at the same time easier way; and turned off on one side through a wood and across some long stretches of open pasture-land. At last, when not a single familiar object could be recognised, the man confessed that he had unfortunately lost his way, but said he should soon be able to find it again, as he could see a village in the distance. Night came on, and the coachman did his part well; he enquired the way everywhere, and never waited to hear the answer. Lydia did not once close her eyes; she was continually seeing fancied resemblances to known objects in the moonshine, which always vanished as they came nearer. When morning dawned, the surrounding objects proved really to be familiar ones, but all the more unexpected. The coachman drew up before a pretty little country-house; a lady came out and opened the carriage-door. Lydia stared at her fixedly, looked round her, gazed at her again, and fainted in Wilhelm's arms.

CHAPTER V.

WILHELM was taken up to a small attic; the house was new, and could not well have been smaller, but it was extremely clean and neat. It was Therese who had met them at the door—a being as different from his beautiful horsewoman as earth from heaven.

She came up to his room, and asked if he wanted anything. "I hope you will excuse me," she said, "for having lodged you in a room which still smells so unpleasantly of paint; my little house is only just finished, and you are inaugurating the chamber appointed for my guests. I only wish a more agreeable occasion had brought you hither. Poor Lydia will not be a pleasant companion, and indeed on the whole you will find much to put up with; my cook has taken herself off at a most unseasonable time, and one of the out-door servants has crushed his hand. The best plan would be to do everything myself, and after all, if one made the proper arrangements, that ought to be possible. Servants are the most dreadful torment; they won't do anything, even for themselves."

She said a good deal more on different subjects; indeed she seemed fond of talking. Wilhelm enquired after Lydia, asking whether he might not see her and excuse his conduct to her.

"It would have no effect at present," replied Therese. "Time consoles and excuses too. Words have but little power to do either. Lydia will not see you. 'Keep him out of my sight,' she exclaimed, as I was leaving her; 'it's enough to make one despair of humanity. Such an

honest face, such a frank, open manner, and this secret knavery!' Lothario she absolves fully, and indeed in a letter to the poor girl, he writes: 'My friends have persuaded me, my friends compelled me.' She reckons you among these friends, and condemns you all together."

"She confers too much honour upon me by these reproaches," replied Wilhelm. "I dare not pretend to Lothario's friendship, much as I respect and admire him, and in this case I was nothing but an innocent instrument. I do not mean to praise the deed; it is enough to say that I was capable of performing it. It concerned the health, nay, even the life of a man whom I cannot help esteeming more than any one I ever knew. Oh, Fräulein, what a man he is! and what a set of men he has around him! I may really say that this is the first society in which I have carried on what may be truly called a conversation; for the first time the truest, deepest meaning of my own words has come back to me from another's mouth, richer, fuller and more comprehensive; what I had only guessed at, became clear, and what I had been thinking, I learnt to see. Unfortunately this enjoyment was disturbed, at first by various anxieties and caprices and then by this unpleasant commission. But I undertook it submissively, feeling it a duty to pay my entrance fee into such a distinguished circle even at the sacrifice of my own feelings."

As he said this, Therese looked at him very kindly. "How delightful it is," she exclaimed, "to hear one's own convictions uttered by a stranger. We never seem to feel so thoroughly ourselves as when some one else perfectly agrees with us. My opinion of Lothario is exactly the same as yours; but it is not every one who does him justice. All however who know him intimately, are enthusiastic in their admiration, and the painful

feeling which always clings to his memory in my own mind, has no power to keep me from thinking of him daily." She sighed as she said these words, and a beautiful tear glistened in her right eye. "Don't fancy me so weak, so easily moved," she went on; "there is something the matter with my eye; a little wart on the lower lid was removed, and successfully; but since that time the eye has always remained weak, and the smallest cause will bring a tear into it. The wart was here; you can see no trace of it now."

He saw no trace, but he gazed into the eye; it was clear as crystal, and he seemed to be gazing down into the depths of her soul.

"Now," she said, "we have pronounced the watchword of our connexion with each other; so let us get fully acquainted as soon as possible. The characters of human beings lie in their history; I will tell you mine; place a little confidence in me too, and let us remain friends even when we are at a distance. The world seems so empty when we only think of it as containing mountains, rivers and towns; but to know of some one here and there, who thinks as we do, and with whom we are still living on, even though it be in silence, makes this earthly globe like a peopled garden."

She hastened away, promising to come back soon and fetch him for a walk. Her presence had produced a very agreeable effect on him; he felt anxious to know in what relation she stood to Lothario. He was sent for, and she came out of her room to meet him.

As they were coming down the narrow, and rather steep staircase, one by one, she said: "All this might have been larger and broader, if I would have listened to the offers of your generous friend; but in order to retain his esteem I must hold fast the qualities which first made

him to esteem me. Where is the steward?" she said as she came down the remaining steps of the staircase. "You must not think," she went on, "that I am rich enough to require a steward. I can manage the few acres of my own little freehold pretty well myself. The steward belongs to my new neighbour, who has bought a fine estate, every inch of which I know by heart. The good old man is lying ill of the gout, and as his people are new to the neighbourhood, I am glad to help them in getting settled."

They took their walk across different fields and meadows, and through some orchards and plantations. Therèse could give the steward such thorough information on everything and account to him so well for the smallest trifles, that Wilhelm had good reason to admire her knowledge, decision, and the clever way in which she knew how to suggest expedients in every case. She lingered nowhere, but hastened at once to the most important points, so that her work was soon finished. "Remember me to your master," she said as she dismissed the man; "I shall come and see him as soon as I can, and I wish him a speedy recovery."

"There," she said smiling, when the steward was gone; "that would be a good opportunity for me to be rich too. My good neighbour is not disinclined to marry me."

"What, the gouty old man!" exclaimed Wilhelm. "I really do not understand how at your age you could come to such a desperate resolution."

"I do not feel any temptation to do so," replied Therèse. "Every one who knows how to manage what he possesses is rich enough, and wealth is a burden to those who do not understand it."

Wilhelm expressed his surprise at the amount of her knowledge in matters of husbandry.

"A decided taste, opportunity in early life, incentives from without, and constant occupation in any useful employment, have rendered much more than that possible in this world," she answered; "and when you have heard what stimulated me to this pursuit you will leave off wondering at this apparently singular talent."

On reaching the house, she left him in her little garden, where the paths were so narrow and the flowers so abundant that he could hardly turn round. As he crossed the court-yard he could not help smiling, for there lay the fire-wood as neatly sawn, split and piled up as if it formed a part of the building and were never to be moved from its present place. All the farming utensils and implements stood clean and in their proper places; the little house was painted red and white and gave one pleasure to behold. Everything that can be produced by a mechanical skill which, though ignorant of the strict relations and proportions of beauty, works for our needs, for durability and for cheerfulness, seemed to be united on this spot. His dinner was sent up to his room, and he had abundant leisure for meditation. He was particularly struck with the fact that now he had made the acquaintance of another interesting woman who had stood in close relation to Lothario. "It is but just," he said to himself, "that such a superior man should attract women of superior mind to himself. How far the influence of real worth and manliness spreads! If only other men did not come off so short! Come now, Wilhelm, confess your fear. When you meet your lovely Amazon again, that being of beings, you will find her after all, in spite of all your hopes and dreams, to your shame and humiliation—his affianced bride!"

CHAPTER VI.

WILHELM had been spending a restless and rather tedious afternoon, when towards evening the door opened and a pretty hunter-boy entered with a polite bow: "Shall we go for a walk?" said the young fellow, and as he spoke Wilhelm recognised Therèse's beautiful eyes.

"Forgive me this masquerade dress," she said; "I am sorry to say it is nothing else now. But as I am to tell you about the days when I was so fond of wearing it, I have tried to bring them back to my memory as vividly as I can. Come; the very place where we have so often rested from our hunting excursions and walks, shall be a means to this end."

They started, and on the way Therèse said to her companion: "It is not fair that I should be the only one to speak. You know enough of me already, and I know nothing about you. Tell me a little about yourself now; that I may be encouraged to lay my own history and circumstances before you."

"Unfortunately," replied Wilhelm, "I have nothing to tell but one succession of mistakes and errors, and I do not know any one from whom I would rather hide my complicated and entangled circumstances, both past and present, than yourself. Your look—everything that surrounds you—your entire self and your behaviour, convince me that you can rejoice in your past life—that your path has been fair, pure and consistent—that you have lost no time and have nothing with which to reproach yourself."

Therèse smiled and said: "We must wait and see whether you will think so when you have heard my

story." They walked on, and in the midst of some general talk Therèse said to him: "Are you free?"

"I believe I am," he answered, "but I do not wish to be."

"Good!" she said; "that indicates a complicated romance, and shows me that you too have something to tell."

As she said this they ascended a hill, and established themselves under a large oak-tree, which spread its shadow far around them. "Here," said Therèse,—"under this German tree I will tell you the history of a German maiden; listen to me patiently."

"My father was one of the substantial nobility of this province, a cheerful, clear-sighted, active, brave man; a tender father, faithful friend, and excellent manager of his affairs; indeed, a man in whom I knew but one fault, and that was a too great indulgence towards a wife who did not know his real worth. It is sad that I should be obliged to say this of my own mother. Her character was the exact opposite of his. She was hasty, fickle, destitute of affection either for her house or for me, her only child; extravagant, but beautiful, intellectual, full of talent, and the delight of the circle which she knew how to draw around her. It was not a numerous society certainly, or it did not remain long together. It consisted chiefly of men; women never felt themselves at ease by her side, and still less could she tolerate the merits of any other woman. I was like my father, both in form and mind. Just as a duckling runs into the water directly it leaves the shell, so the kitchen and store-room, the barns and lofts, were my element from my earliest youth, and the order and cleanliness of the house my one instinct and only aim, even while I was still a playing child. This pleased my father, and step by step he provided my

childish efforts and desires with the most appropriate employment. My mother, on the contrary, did not like me, and did not for a moment conceal her dislike.

“As I grew older, my own activity and my father’s love grew stronger. When we were alone taking a walk in the fields, or I was helping him to look through his accounts, I could feel how happy he was. When I looked into his eyes, it seemed as if I were looking into my own; for it was in my eyes that the perfect resemblance to my father lay. But this courage, nay even this expression, would vanish in my mother’s presence. He would excuse me gently when she was angrily and unjustly blaming me; and he would take my part, but not as if he could protect me, only as if he could plead for my good qualities. In the same way he never placed hindrances in the way of any of her fancies. She took a passionate liking for private theatricals; a theatre was put up: there was no lack of men of every age and appearance who were willing to present themselves on the stage with her, but women were not so easy to find. Lydia had been brought up with me; she was a pleasant girl, and had promised to be very lovely, even from her earliest childhood. She was obliged to take the secondary parts, an old waiting-woman gave the mothers and aunts, and my mother kept the heroines, shepherdesses and leading characters of all sorts for her own share. I can’t tell you how absurd it seemed to me, to see a number of people whom I knew so well, standing there dressed up and wanting to be taken for something else than they really were. To me they were never anything more than my mother and Lydia, that Baron or the other secretary, whether they appeared as princes, counts or peasants; and it seemed incomprehensible to me that they could imagine I should believe they were happy or unhappy,

in love or indifferent, avaricious or generous, when in most cases I full well knew the contrary to be the case. For this reason I seldom remained among the audience; I snuffed the candles for them, in order to have something to do, got supper ready, and the next morning, long before they were awake, used to put away all their dresses, which were generally left thrown about in confusion the evening before.

“This kind of activity did not displease my mother, but I could not win her love; she despised me, and I have reason to know that she has said more than once bitterly: ‘If a mother could be as uncertain as a father, it would be difficult to believe that this servant-girl was my daughter.’ I do not deny that this conduct gradually weaned me from her; I observed her actions as if they were those of a stranger, and being accustomed to watch the servants with a falcon’s eye (the foundation-stone of all good housekeeping, be it observed in passing), the relations subsisting between my mother and her acquaintances could not but strike me. It was easy to see that she did not look on all the men alike; I kept a sharper watch, and soon noticed that Lydia was her *confidante*, and that this confidence had led the girl herself into a deeper acquaintance with the passion which she had so often seen represented from her earliest youth. I knew of all the secret meetings, but I was silent and said nothing to my father; I was afraid of grieving him. A time came however when I was forced to speak. Some of their undertakings could not be managed without bribing the servants, who on this began to defy me, neglect my father’s orders, and refuse to obey mine. The disorders arising from this conduct were not to be borne; I told my father all, and poured out my grievances to him,

"He listened very quietly. 'My good child,' he said at last with a smile, 'I know everything; be calm and bear it patiently; it is only for your sake that I suffer these things to go on.'

"But I was not calm; I had no patience. In my own heart I blamed my father; I did not believe that any reason could make it necessary for him to allow such things. I insisted on order being observed in the house, and determined to push matters to the utmost extremity.

"My mother had a good fortune of her own, but spent more than she ought to have done, a fact which I could see caused many an explanation between my parents. For a long time matters remained in the same state; at last my mother's own love-affairs brought them to a kind of crisis.

"Her principal admirer proved most glaringly unfaithful; she took an aversion to her house, the neighbourhood and, indeed, to her entire circumstances and connexions. She thought of going to live on another estate, but that was too lonely; then of removing into town; there she was not a personage of sufficient importance. I do not know what passed between her and my father; it was sufficient that at last he resolved, on certain conditions which I did not learn, to give his consent to a journey which she had planned to the south of France.

"We were free then, and lived as if in heaven; indeed, I believe my father lost nothing by her absence, though he paid a large sum to purchase it. All our useless servants were dismissed, and fortune seemed to favour our orderly arrangements, for we had some very good years, in which everything succeeded to the best of our wishes. Unfortunately this happy state of things did not last long. Quite unexpectedly my father had a stroke of paralysis, which affected the whole of his right side and

deprived him of the free use of speech. We were obliged to guess all his wishes, for he never uttered the word he had in his mind. Many moments were rendered exceedingly distressing to me by this infirmity; he would expressly desire to be alone with me, would intimate by vehement gestures that every one was to leave the room, and yet when we were alone, was totally incapable of bringing out the right word. His impatience became excessive, and his condition grieved me to the heart. It seemed clear that he had something to say which concerned me especially. How I longed to know what it was! Before, I had always been able to read everything in his eyes, but now every effort was fruitless; even his eyes had ceased to speak. This much alone was clear to me: he wished for nothing and required nothing for himself; all his endeavours were only to acquaint me with something, which, sad to say, I never learnt. He had a second attack, soon after which he became totally inert and incapable of action, and died before long.

“I do not know how the idea came to take possession of my mind, but I fancied that somewhere or other he had a hidden treasure which he wished me, rather than my mother, to possess after his death. While he was still living, I looked for this treasure; I found none, and at his death a seal was put upon everything. I wrote to my mother, offering to remain at home as her steward and manager; she refused my offer and I was obliged to leave the estate. A mutual will was found, in which the possession and enjoyment of everything was assured to my mother, and I made dependent on her, at least during her life-time. Now, for the first time, I believed I understood my father's hints; I pitied him for having been so weak as to act unjustly towards me even after his death. Some of my friends maintained that he

might just as well have disinherited me, and wanted me to dispute the will; this however I could not resolve upon doing; I revered my father's memory too much; I trusted to fate, and had confidence in myself.

"There was a lady in the neighbourhood who possessed large landed property, and with whom I had always been on good terms. She took me into her house with pleasure, and I soon learnt to superintend her house-keeping without difficulty. Her life was carefully regulated, and she was a lover of order; I helped her faithfully in all her contests with her steward and servants. I am neither mean nor suspicious, but we women are on the whole much more decidedly opposed to waste than even men. Fraudulent dealings are insupportable to us; we wish people only to enjoy what they are justly entitled to.

"Here I was in my element again, and could mourn my father's death quietly. My protectress was satisfied with me, and only one little circumstance disturbed my peace: Lydia came back; my mother had the cruelty to cast the poor girl off, after she was thoroughly corrupted. She had learnt from my mother to look upon passion as a vocation; she was accustomed to restrain herself in nothing. On her unexpected reappearance, my benefactress took her in too; Lydia wished to help me, but could not accommodate herself to our ways.

"About this time the relations and future heirs of the lady I was living with, came often to visit her and amuse themselves by hunting. Lothario sometimes accompanied them, and I soon noticed his manifest superiority to the rest, without however thinking at all of myself in connexion with him. He was polite to every one, and Lydia soon seemed to attract his notice. I had a great deal to do, and was seldom with the guests; when he

was present I spoke less than usual; for I will not deny that animated conversation has always seemed to me the very spice and seasoning of life. I had enjoyed talking over everything that happened, with my father. What is not duly discussed is not duly considered. There was no one whom I liked better to listen to than Lothario, when he was describing his travels and campaigns. The whole world lay as clear and open before him, as the district of country which I had been helping to manage and cultivate, before me. I felt I was not listening to the marvellous experiences of an adventurer, or the exaggerated half-truths of a narrow-minded traveller who is always putting himself forward instead of the country which he is professing to describe; Lothario did not tell us about the places, he took us to them; I have seldom enjoyed anything so thoroughly.

“But one evening, when I heard him speaking about women, my pleasure was beyond expression. The conversation had arisen quite naturally; some ladies from the neighbourhood were visiting us and making some of the usual remarks about female education. They said that our sex was treated unjustly, that men wished to keep possession of all the higher branches of cultivation for themselves, barring our way to every science, and only requiring us to be dressed-up dolls or good house-keepers. Lothario said very little to all this, and did not express his opinion until some of the party had left. Then he exclaimed: ‘How strange it is that men should be blamed for wishing to place women in the highest position they are capable of taking! For what position can be higher than the government of the house?’ While the husband has to plague himself with out-of-door-affairs, has first to gain property and then to protect it; has perhaps even to take his share in the government of the

country, to be dependent on circumstances in every direction, and indeed I might say, to fancy he is ruling when in reality he is doing nothing of the kind; has to be politic where he would like to be reasonable, to dissemble where he wishes to be open, and be false where he longs to be true;—while, for the sake of ends which he never attains, he has every moment to give up the highest end of all, harmony with himself—the prudent mistress of the house is really governing within her domain, and placing contentment and activity of every kind within the reach of an entire family. What greater happiness can there be for a human being, than to be able to carry out what he is convinced is right and good, and to feel that the means for working out his ends lie in his own power? Now where can and ought our nearest aims to lie, if not at home? Where are we to look for the satisfaction of all our constantly returning and indispensable necessities, if not in the place where we rise in the morning and lie down to rest at night, and where kitchen and cellar are supposed to be always stored and prepared with every kind of provision for ourselves and our families? But what an amount of regularity and activity is needed to carry on this never-ceasing order of things, in an uninterrupted, vigorous succession! How few are the men to whom it is given to reappear regularly like the stars, and rule the day as well as the night; to train and model their domestic instruments after their own wills, to sow and reap, store up or distribute, and to move on in their own circle quietly, lovingly and wisely! By means of this home government alone, and not until she has it firmly in her hands, can a woman make the man she loves truly master; by observation she acquires every variety of knowledge, and turns it to account by her energy and industry. In

this way she is dependent on no one, and secures true independence—domestic and internal—for her husband. He feels that his property is safe, and his earnings are well-used; he can therefore turn his thoughts to more important subjects, and, should fortune favour, be that to the state which sits so well upon his wife at home.

“After this he described the woman he should wish for as a wife. I blushed; he was describing me exactly. I enjoyed my triumph quietly, and all the more because I could gather from the circumstances that he was not thinking of me personally, that in fact he did not know me. I can recollect no pleasanter feeling in my whole life than this;—that a man I so thoroughly looked up to should prefer, not my person, but my character and most intrinsic qualities. I felt it to be such a great reward and such an encouragement for the future.

“When they were all gone my kind and worthy friend said with a smile: ‘It’s a pity that men so often think and talk about things which they never carry out into practice; if that were not the case here would have been the most capital match for my dear Therèse.’ I laughed at this, adding that though certainly men’s understandings led them to look out for good house-wives, their hearts and imaginations made them long for other qualities, and that we house-wives had but little chance in the lists with young and lovely girls. I said this in Lydia’s hearing, for she did not conceal that Lothario had made a deep impression on her, and, indeed, he seemed to show her more attention at every visit. She was poor, and her rank in life such that she could not think of his marrying her, but the delight of charming and being charmed was too much for her powers of resistance. I had never been in love, and was not even now, but I must confess that indescribably delightful as

it was to me to see how my character and disposition were appreciated, and where they were ranked by a man I so thoroughly respected, this was not enough to satisfy me altogether. I began to wish that he could know and take a personal interest in me. This wish arose however, without any decided thought as to what might follow from its fulfilment.

“The most important service I did my benefactress was in trying to bring the timber on her estate into order. On this valuable part of her property—the great worth of which was continually increasing by the lapse of time and the effect of circumstances—things, sad to say, were going on in the old slow way. There was neither plan nor order anywhere, and she was subjected to endless frauds and robberies. Many rising grounds were perfectly bare, and trees of equal growth were only to be found where the timber was oldest. I inspected the whole myself, in company with an experienced forester; had the woods measured, and began felling, sowing and planting, so that in a short time everything was in good train. In order to ride and walk more easily through the woods, I had a suit of men’s clothes made for me; I visited a great many spots, and was feared everywhere.

“I heard that Lothario and his young friends had arranged a shooting-party, and for the first time in my life it came into my head that I would show myself off, or rather (not to do myself an injustice), try to let this good, clever man see what I really was. I put on my boy’s dress, slung my gun across my shoulder and went out with the keeper to wait for the party at the boundary. They came; Lothario did not know me at first; one of my benefactress’s nephews introduced me to him as a clever young forester, and joked about my youth

and good qualities so long that at last Lothario recognised me. The nephew seconded my intention, as if the whole had been a preconcerted scheme, detailing most gratefully and minutely all I had done for his aunt and therefore for himself.

“Lothario listened attentively, began a conversation with me, asked many questions about the estates and the property lying in the neighbourhood, and I was delighted to have such an opportunity of showing him how much I knew. I passed my examination very well; I asked his opinion as to certain projects of improvement; he approved them and told me of some similar cases, strengthening my reasons by making their connexion clear. Every moment increased my satisfaction. It was fortunate however that I only wanted to be known and appreciated, not loved; for when we came home I noticed more than ever that his attentions to Lydia seemed to betray a secret affection for her. I had gained my end, and yet I was not at peace. From that day forward he showed me sincere respect and a most pleasant confidence; in society he generally addressed me and asked my opinion; and in all domestic matters seemed to feel sure that I must know everything. His sympathy was exceedingly encouraging; he drew me into the conversation even when political economy and finance were being discussed, and in his absence I tried to increase my knowledge, not only of the province, but of the entire country. This was not difficult; it was only the repetition on a large scale of what I was thoroughly acquainted with on a small one; but the conversation to a certain extent always turned at last on matters of economy, though perhaps not in the strictest sense of the word. We often spoke of the vast results which it was possible for men to bring about even with small means, by a

constant and consistent application of their powers, time and money.

"I did not try to check my liking for Lothario, and as I thought I could perceive more clearly every day that Lydia—not I—was the cause of his increasingly frequent visits, I felt only too soon, how strong, warm, pure and sincere was the love I bore him. Lydia at last was perfectly convinced that he came on her account; she made me her confidante, and these very confidences were some source of comfort, for what she explained so much to her own advantage seemed to me of no great significance, and I could discover no trace of any wish for a serious, lasting connexion on his side, though the passionate girl's desire to become his at any price was all the more evident.

"Matters stood thus, when one day the lady I lived with surprised me by bringing a most unexpected proposal. 'Lothario makes you the offer of his hand,' she said; 'he would like to have you at his side through life.' She dilated on my qualities, and added what I was so very glad to hear: Lothario was convinced that in me he had found the person he had so long been seeking.

"This was for me the highest happiness. A man whom I thoroughly esteemed had asked my hand—a man at whose side and in close connexion with whom I could see before me a prospect of turning both my natural tendencies, and the talents I had gained by practice, to full, free, extended and useful account; the sum of my entire existence seemed to have increased infinitely. I consented: he came himself and spoke with me alone; he gave me his hand, gazed into my eyes, embraced me and pressed a kiss upon my lips. It was the first and last. He confided to me the entire position of his affairs, telling me what his American campaign had cost him, to

what extent he had encumbered his estate with debts, and how these matters had led to some differences between himself and his great-uncle: that the worthy man really wished to provide for him, but in his own fashion, by giving him a rich wife, while of course any right-thinking man could only be really helped by a domestic one: but that he hoped by his sister's influence to persuade the old man. He laid before me the state of his fortune, with all his plans and prospects, and begged me to work with him. But our engagement was to be a secret until his uncle had consented to it.

"He was scarcely gone when Lydia came and asked me: 'Had he perhaps said anything about her?' I said 'No,' and wearied her with dry housekeeping talk. She was restless and out of humour, and his behaviour, when he came again, did not improve her state of mind.

"But I see the sun is setting! That is fortunate for you; you would else have had to hear the story I am so fond of repeating over to myself in all its minutest details. Let me pass on quickly; we are coming to an epoch in my tale over which it is not well to linger.

"Lothario introduced me to his delightful and excellent sister, and she with great tact contrived to present me to their uncle. I won the old man's heart; he gave his consent to our wishes, and I went back to my benefactress with the happy news. The matter ceased to be a secret in the house; Lydia heard of it, and treated it as an impossibility. At last, however, when it was placed beyond all doubt, she vanished suddenly, and no one knew what had become of her.

"The marriage-day drew on. I had often asked him to give me his picture, and one day, just as he was going to ride away, I reminded him of his promise. 'You have forgotten,' he said, 'to give me the case you want

it fitted into.' This was true. I had received a present from a friend which I valued very much. A monogram woven in her hair was fastened under the glass, and within was a blank sheet of ivory on which her likeness was just going to have been painted, when, sad to say, death snatched her from me. Lothario's love had come to make me happy while I was suffering from her loss, and I wished the vacant place left in her present to be filled up by his picture.

"I ran to my room, fetched my jewel-box and opened it in his presence. The moment he looked in he noticed a locket with the portrait of a lady, took it up, examined it attentively and asked in a hurried tone: 'Whose likeness is this?' 'My mother's,' I answered. 'I could have sworn,' he said, 'that it was the picture of a Frau von Saint Alban, whom I met some years ago in Switzerland.' 'Yes,' said I smiling, 'it is one and the same person; you made the acquaintance of your mother-in-law without knowing it. Saint Alban is the romantic name under which my mother travels; she is bearing it at the present moment in France!'

"'I am the most miserable of men!' he cried, throwing the picture back into the box, covering his eyes with his hand and rushing out of the room. He threw himself on his horse, I ran on to the balcony and called after him; he turned round, waved his hand to me and rode quickly away—I have never seen him since."

The sun went down; Therèse looked fixedly into the red glow, and both her beautiful eyes filled with tears.

She was silent and laid her hand on the hands of her new friend; he kissed it sympathisingly; she dried her tears and stood up. "Let us return," she said, "and take thought for those at home."

Their conversation on the way back was not very animated; they came in at the garden-gate and saw Lydia sitting on a bench; she rose, avoided them and went into the house; she had a paper in her hand, and two little girls were with her. "I see," said Therèse, "that she is still carrying about Lothario's letter; it is her only consolation. In it he tells her that directly he is well she shall come back to live in his house, and begs her in the meantime to remain quietly with me. She hangs on these words and consoles herself with his letter, but his friends are quite out of favour."

While she was speaking the two children had come up. They gave their evening greeting to Therèse, and an account of all that had happened in the house during her absence.

"Here you see another of my occupations," she said. "Lothario's excellent sister and I have made an agreement to train up a number of children between us; I take the active and industrious little housekeepers, and she teaches those who give proof of possessing quieter and more refined talents: it is only fair that the happiness of future husbands and families should be provided for in every way. A new era in your life will begin with the knowledge of my noble, delightful friend. Her beauty and goodness make her worthy the adoration of the whole world." Wilhelm did not trust himself to say that he knew the beautiful Countess already, and that his transitory connexion with her would be a source of never-ceasing pain to him; he was very glad that Therèse did not continue the conversation, and that her duties-obliged her to go in doors. He was now alone, and this last intelligence,—that the young and lovely Countess had been forced to make amends for the loss of her happiness by a life of charity,—made him very sad. He felt

that in her case it could only be the necessity of diverting her thoughts, that led her to put a hope of making others happy, in the place of her own glad enjoyment of life; and he considered Therèse very fortunate, inasmuch as that sad and sudden change in her outward circumstances had necessitated no change in herself. "He is the happiest man," exclaimed Wilhelm, "who is not obliged to cast away his whole former life, in order to place himself in harmony with his fate."

Therèse came in to his room, excusing herself for disturbing him. "My entire library," she said, "is contained in this closet in the wall; it consists rather of books that I do not care to throw away, than of those I wish to keep. Lydia has asked for a religious book, and I dare say there will be one or two among the rest. (People who are worldly enough the whole year, fancy they must be pious in time of trouble; they look on goodness and morality as a medicine to be taken with loathing, and only when you feel ill; and on clergymen and moralists as nothing but physicians, whom it is expedient to get out of the house as soon as you can. I am glad to confess, on the contrary, that religion and morality seem to me more like a diet, but a diet that only answers its purpose when I make it the rule of my life, and never lose sight of it during the entire year."

She searched among the books and found a few so-called works of religious edification. "It was from my mother," said Therèse, "that Lydia learnt to take refuge in such books. Novels and plays were her life so long as her lovers remained faithful; their departure brought these books back into favour directly. But, indeed, on the whole," she went on, "I can never understand how people have come to believe that God speaks to us by means of books and histories. The man whose relation

to the universe is not directly revealed to him by that universe itself; whose own heart does not tell him what he owes to himself and others, will not be likely to learn it from books, whose chief use really lies in giving names to our errors."

She left Wilhelm alone, and he passed the evening in looking through her little library. It was really a mere chance collection.

Therèse remained always the same during the few days that Wilhelm spent in her house. She told him at intervals, and very circumstantially, all the consequences of what had occurred to her. Days, hours, places and names were all distinctly present to her memory, and we will now sum up in a few words what it is necessary for our readers to know.

Unfortunately the reason of Lothario's sudden departure was only too easy to explain. He had met Therèse's mother on her journey, and had been struck by her attractions; she had not been niggardly in her use of them, and so this unfortunate and quickly-passing romance had separated him from marriage with the woman who seemed to have been created expressly for him. As for Therèse, she remained in the pure and untainted circle of her own occupations and duties. It became known that Lydia had been staying in the neighbourhood secretly. She was rejoiced that the marriage had not taken place, though the reasons for this were unknown to her. She tried to approach Lothario, and he, more from despair than from affection, as it seemed—more surprised into the thing than moved by reflection—more from *ennui* than from any definite purpose, had met her wishes.

Therèse had borne this quietly; she laid claim to nothing further from him now; and, indeed, even if he had

been her husband, she might perhaps have had courage to put up with such a connexion, so long as it did not interfere with her domestic order; at least she often said, that a woman who managed her household thoroughly well, could afford to take no notice of such fancies in her husband, and always feel sure of his return to her.

Therèse's mother had soon brought her own pecuniary affairs into disorder, for which her daughter had to suffer, as she received but little money from her. The old lady, Therèse's benefactress, died, leaving her her own little freehold and a very fair capital as legacy. Therèse knew at once how to adapt herself to these altered and narrowed circumstances; Lothario offered her a better property, employing Jarno to negotiate the affair; Therèse however refused. "I wish to prove even in small things," she said, "that I was worthy to have shared great ones with him; but one thing I do reserve to myself: and that is, that if ever chance should place me in any difficulty, whether in respect to my own affairs or those of others, I may at once and without hesitation resort to my valuable friend."

Nothing is less liable to remain hidden and unused than well-directed action. Therèse was scarcely settled on her little estate, when the neighbours began to seek her nearer acquaintance and ask her advice; and the new owner of the property lying nearest her own, gave her clearly to understand that it only rested with herself to accept his hand, and become heiress to the greater part of his estates. This she had already mentioned to Wilhelm, and in alluding to it had jested with him on the subject of suitable and unsuitable marriages.

"There is nothing," she said, "that sets people's tongues going more than what they call an unsuitable match; and yet there are usually many more unsuitable

than suitable ones; for how seldom do the most marriages look anything but very doubtful after a short time! The mingling of different classes by marriage only deserves the name of a *mésalliance* in so far as the one party cannot sympathise in those natural and acquired habits of the other which have become as it were absolutely necessary to him. Different classes have different modes of living, which they can neither share with one another nor exchange; and for this reason such marriages should be avoided as much as possible; but exceptions, and very happy ones, are quite possible. In the same way the marriage of a young girl to an elderly man is always a doubtful proceeding, and yet I have sometimes seen it turn out well. I only know one kind of marriage that could be called a thoroughly unsuitable one for myself: a marriage where I should be expected to live as an idle fine lady in the midst of show and ceremony; why, I would rather give my hand to any honest farmer's son in the neighbourhood."

Wilhelm now began to think of returning to Lothario, and begged his new friend to procure him at least a few parting words with Lydia. The impetuous girl allowed herself to be persuaded; Wilhelm spoke kindly to her, and she answered: "I have overcome my first anguish; I shall never cease to love Lothario, but now I see what his friends are, and I am sorry that he has such men about him. The Abbé is capable of leaving people in their need—nay, even of plunging them into it—for the sake of one of his own whims; the doctor would like to make everything smooth and level; Jarno has no heart, and you—certainly no principle. Go on as you have begun—let those three men make a tool of you; they will give you many more such missions to perform. I knew that my presence had been distasteful to them for

a long time; not because I had discovered their secret, but because I had watched them, and saw that they had one. What was the reason of those locked-up rooms and strange passages? Why is no one allowed to go into the great tower? Why did they banish me to my own room whenever they could? I will confess that it was jealousy which first led me to this discovery. I was afraid that a more fortunate rival was hidden somewhere. I do not think so now; I am sure that Lothario loves me and would not deceive me, but I am equally sure that he is being deceived by his false and artful friends. If you really wish to deserve well at his hands, if your guilty conduct towards me is ever to be forgiven you, then deliver him out of the hands of those people! But what am I hoping for? Give him this letter; repeat its contents: that I shall love him for ever, that I trust to his words. Ah!" she cried, rising and weeping on Therèse's neck, "he is surrounded by my enemies; they will try to persuade him that I have sacrificed nothing for his sake; and even the best men are glad to hear that no sacrifice is too great for them, and that they have no need to be grateful."

Wilhelm's parting from Therèse was more cheerful; she hoped that they might meet again. "You know me thoroughly," she said; "this time you have always allowed me to talk, but next time it will be your duty to return my frankness."

On his way back he had leisure to think over this new and bright apparition as she stood out vividly in his memory. What confidence she had awakened in him! He thought of Mignon and Felix, and how happy the children would be under such care; then of himself, and of the delight it would be to live near a human being whose character was so entirely clear and transparent as

Therèse's. As he came nearer to the castle the old tower with its many corridors and side-buildings struck him more than ever, and he resolved to question Jarno and the Abbé on this matter at the earliest opportunity.

CHAPTER VII.

ON reaching the castle Wilhelm found Lothario on the road to perfect recovery; the doctor and the Abbé had left, and Jarno was there alone. The patient soon began to ride on horseback as usual, sometimes alone, sometimes with his friends. His conversation was serious and pleasing, instructive and enlivening at the same time; and there were often traces of a delicate sensibility which he would try to hide, and almost seemed to blame if it persisted in appearing against his will.

Thus on one occasion at supper he was silent, though not sad.

"I am sure you have had an adventure to-day," said Jarno at last; "and I should say, a pleasant one."

"How well you understand your friends!" answered Lothario. "Yes, I met with a very agreeable adventure. At another time it might not perhaps have made such a pleasant impression on me, but to-day I happened to be in a susceptible mood. As evening came on I was riding through the villages on the other side of the river, a road I used often to take in former years. My illness must have told upon me more than I thought it had; I felt impressible; and as my strength revived it seemed as if I were new-born. Every object on the road looked just as it used to look in former years; it is very long since things have seemed so fair, so lovely or so charming to me. I knew that this feeling arose from weakness,

but I allowed myself to enjoy it, and as I rode on gently I began to understand that people might even learn to love an illness which attunes the mind to such sweet feelings. Perhaps you know why I used to take that road so often?"

"If I remember rightly," said Jarno, "it was a little love-affair with one of the farmers' daughters."

"It might be called a great one," replied Lothario; "for we loved each other very much, we were quite in earnest, and our love lasted tolerably long. It chanced to-day that everything concurred to remind me forcibly of those early days of our love. The boys were shaking the cockchafers down from the trees, and the ash-leaves were just at the point they had reached on the day I first saw her. It was a long time since I had seen Margaret, for she had married far from here, and it was quite by chance that I heard she had come a few weeks ago to visit her father."

"Then your ride was not quite accidental?"

"I will not deny," said Lothario, "that I wanted to meet her again. As I came near their house, I saw her father sitting at the door, and a child of about a year old standing by him. As I came closer, a woman looked hurriedly out of the upstairs window, and on coming still nearer I heard some one rush down the stairs. I was sure it must be Margaret, and had better confess the fact that I flattered myself she had recognised me and was hastening to meet me. But how ashamed I felt when she darted out of the front door, snatched up the child who was standing rather near the horses, and carried it into the house! It was an unpleasant feeling for me, and the only consolation—a poor one indeed!—for my wounded vanity, was that I fancied I could detect a perceptible blush on her neck and on the one ear which

was uncovered. I drew up my horse and spoke to her father, casting sidelong glances at the windows meanwhile, in the hope that her face might appear at one or other of them, but I could discover no trace of her. I did not like to ask any questions and rode on. My annoyance was in some degree lessened by a feeling of wonder and admiration, for though I had hardly caught a glimpse of her face, she seemed to be scarcely changed at all, and yet ten years is a long space of time! Indeed, she seemed to me to look even younger; just as slight in her figure and elastic in her tread; her neck if possible still more graceful than it used to be, and her cheek as susceptible to its former lovely blush. Yet she is the mother of six children; indeed, for ought I know to the contrary, there may be more! This apparition agreed so well with the enchanted world around me, that I rode on, feeling younger than ever, and did not turn back until I reached the next wood and the sun was setting. Though the falling dew reminded me of the doctor's orders and it would most likely have been more prudent to ride straight home, I took the road that led by the farm-house. The garden is only surrounded by a slight hedge, and I saw the figure of a woman walking up and down in it. I rode along the foot-path to the hedge, and found myself not far from the very person I wanted.

“Though the setting sun shone in my eyes, I could see that she was busy close to the fence, which hardly screened her from me. I fancied I could recognise my old love, and on coming up to her stopped my horse, not without some stirring at my heart. A few tall wild-rose sprays, which a gentle breeze was waving to and fro, prevented me from seeing her figure distinctly. I spoke to her and asked how she was. She answered in a low

voice: 'Quite well.' In the meantime I perceived that a child was pulling up flowers behind the hedge, and took the opportunity of asking her where her other children were. 'This is not my child,' she said; 'it would be early indeed.' At that moment the rose sprays gave me an opportunity of seeing her face clearly, and I was completely puzzled. It was my old love, and it was not; if anything, younger and almost lovelier than she had been ten years ago. 'But are not you the farmer's daughter?' I said in my perplexity. 'No,' she answered, 'I am her niece.' 'You are strangely like one another,' I replied. 'Yes, so every one says who knew her ten years ago.'

"I went on asking her various questions; my error was pleasant to me, though I had discovered it, and I could not tear myself away from this living image of my former happiness. Meanwhile the child had left us and gone towards the pond in search of flowers. She took leave of me and ran after it.

"I had now however learned that my former love was really at her father's house, and as I rode home my thoughts were busy in conjecturing whether it had been she or her niece who had snatched the child away from the horses. I went through the whole scene in my own mind several times, and I do not know when anything has affected me more pleasantly. But I see clearly that I am still ill, and we must beg the doctor to deliver us from all remaining traces of such a frame of mind."

With confidential confessions of pretty love-affairs it often happens as with the telling of ghost-stories: tell one, and the others follow of themselves.

Our little party found abundant material of this description in looking back on their past lives. Lothario had the most to tell. Jarno's stories all bore one peculiar character, and we know already what Wilhelm's con-

fessions must have been. He trembled all the time, lest his companions should remind him of his adventure with the Countess, but in reality nothing was further from their thoughts.

"It is very true," said Lothario, "that there is in the world nothing pleasanter than to feel one's heart opening to the love of some new object after a pause of indifference; and yet I would willingly have given up that feeling for my whole life, if fate would only have united me with Therèse. We cannot be always young men, and we ought not to be always children. [What can a man who knows the world—knows what he has to do in it, and to hope from it—wish for more, than for a wife who will work everywhere with him, and prepare everything for him; whose energy will pursue what his own is obliged to pass over, and whose activity can expand in every direction while his may only pursue one straight course?] What a heaven I had dreamed of with Therèse! Not a heaven of impassioned and extravagant bliss, but one of a secure and certain life on earth: order in prosperity, courage in adversity, care in the smallest trifles, and a soul able to comprehend the greatest matters and yet to lay them aside if necessary. I saw that she was endowed with just those gifts whose development we admire, when reading in history of women who strike us as far superior to men: the same clear discernment of circumstances, readiness in all emergencies, and certainty in details, which insures the well-being of the whole, though scarcely a thought appears to have been spent upon it. You ought to forgive me," he said turning to Wilhelm with a smile, "for having forsaken Aurelia for Therèse; with the latter I could look forward to a bright and cheerful life, while with the former it was not possible to imagine a happy hour."

"I will not deny," said Wilhelm, "that I came here with a great deal of bitter feeling towards you in my heart, and had resolved to blame your conduct to Aurelia very severely."

"Yes, and it was worthy of blame," replied Lothario. "I ought never to have confounded my friendship for her with the feeling of love, or to have forced an admiration which she could neither excite nor retain into the place of the esteem which she really deserved. Sad to say, she was not amiable when she loved—the greatest misfortune that can befall any woman."

"Well, be it so!" replied Wilhelm. "We cannot always avoid what still may be blameworthy; we cannot always prevent our opinions and actions from being turned out of their right and natural course in a remarkable way; but still there are certain duties which never ought to be lost sight of. May Aurelia's ashes rest in peace! She was our friend, and we will strew flowers tenderly on her grave without reproaching ourselves or blaming her. At this very grave however, where the poor mother is resting at last, let me ask you why you do not acknowledge her child—a son that would delight any other father, but whom you seem totally to neglect? How can you, with your pure and tender heart, so entirely ignore a father's feelings? You have not once during this whole time uttered a syllable about that precious little creature, and there is so much to tell about his lovely winning ways."

"Of whom are you talking?" said Lothario. "I do not understand you."

"Whom should I be speaking of but your own son, Aurelia's son,—that beautiful boy who is really wanting in nothing but a kind father's love?"

"You make a great mistake there, my friend," exclaimed Lothario. "Aurelia had no son, at least not by me. I know of no child, or I would acknowledge it with joy; indeed, as it is, I will gladly look on the little creature as a legacy from her, and take charge of his education. But tell me, did she ever give you an idea that the child was hers, or mine?"

"I do not remember ever having heard any express word from her to that effect; but it was always taken for granted, and I never doubted the fact a moment."

"I think I can throw some light on the matter," said Jarno. "An old woman,—you must often have seen her,—brought the child to Aurelia. She adopted it with a passionate kind of affection, and hoped that the little thing's presence might be a comfort to her in her trouble; indeed, he did give her many a happy moment."

This explanation made Wilhelm very uneasy; not only the handsome boy Felix, but his good, kind, little Mignon came vividly into his mind, and he said how much he should like to take them out of their present position.

"We will soon manage that," said Lothario; "we will put that singular girl into Therèse's care—she could not be in better hands—and the boy I should think you would take yourself, for frequent intercourse with children will often cultivate what even women have left unfinished in us."

"I should think," said Jarno, "you had better give up the stage altogether. You have really no talent for it."

This was a hard blow for Wilhelm, and he was obliged to exercise some self-control; Jarno's rough words wounded his self-love in no small degree. "If you can convince me of that," he said with a forced smile, "you

will be doing me a great service; but it is rather a melancholy one to wake a man out of his pet dream."

"Without saying much more on that matter," replied Jarno, "I should like to induce you first to fetch the children; the rest will all come right in time."

"I am quite ready to do that," said Wilhelm. "Indeed, I feel restless and curious to know whether I can find out anything more about the boy's history, and I long to see the girl again, for she has attached herself to me in a most remarkable way."

It was agreed that he should start without delay.

By the next day he had made his preparations, his horse was saddled and he had only to take leave of Lothario. When dinner time came they sat down to table as usual without waiting for the master of the house; he came late and sat down with them.

"I would wager," said Jarno, "that you have been putting your tender heart to a fresh trial to-day; you have not been able to resist the desire of seeing your old love once more."

"Very well guessed!" replied Lothario.

"Then do let us hear how it turned out," said Jarno. "I am extremely curious."

"I will not deny," said Lothario, "that the adventure lay nearer my heart than perhaps it ought to have done, and this made me resolve to ride over once more, and really see the person whose renovated image had caused me such a pleasant illusion. At some distance from the house I dismounted, and had the horses led aside, so as not to disturb the children who were playing at the door. I went in, and by chance she came to meet me, for she, indeed, it was this time, and I recognised her in spite of the great alteration. She was stouter, and seemed to me

taller; her sedate manner could not hide the old grace and loveliness, and her gaiety had sobered down into quiet thought. The head which used to sit so freely and lightly on her shoulders, was a little bowed, and on her forehead were a few faint lines.

"She looked down on seeing me, but there was no blush that could betray any inward agitation. I held out my hand and she gave me hers. I asked after her husband; he was not at home; after her children, and she went to the door and called them; they came and clustered round her. There is no sight more charming than a mother with her child in her arms, and none that fills you with more reverence than a mother in the midst of many children. For the sake of saying something I asked the little ones' names; she begged me to come in and wait for her father. I agreed, and she took me into their living-room, where nearly everything stood in its old place and—strange to say—her beautiful niece, her very image, was sitting on the low stool behind the spinning-wheel; just as I had so often found my old love in the old times. A little girl exactly like her mother had run after us, and thus I stood between the Past and Future, in the strangest Present, as if in an orange-grove, where, within one small limit, blossoms and fruit grow close together in their various stages. The niece left the room to fetch some refreshment; I took the hand of the woman I had formerly loved so dearly, and said: 'It is a real pleasure to me to see you again.' 'You are very good to say so,' she replied, 'but I can assure you, too, that to me it is inexpressibly pleasant. How often I have wished to see you, if only once more in my life! I have wished it at moments which I believed would be my last.' She said this in a calm tone, without any agitation, in the natural way which used to enchant me

so much. The niece came back, and then her father. I will leave you to imagine my feelings while I staid with them, and also when I came away."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE noble-minded women Wilhelm already knew, and those he had heard spoken of, were constantly in his thoughts during his journey back to the town; and their strange destinies, involving so little that was pleasant, were painfully present to his mind. "Poor Mariana!" he exclaimed, "what may I not still be forced to hear about you? And that glorious Amazon, that noble, guardian angel to whom I owe so much—whom I am hoping to meet everywhere, and, alas, can find nowhere—in what sad circumstances may I perhaps light upon you, if we should ever see each other again!"

When he reached the town, not one of his acquaintances happened to be at home; he hurried to the theatre, hoping to find them at a rehearsal; everything was quiet, and the house seemed empty, but still one shutter was open. He went in, and on reaching the stage, found Aurelia's old servant busy sewing pieces of linen together for some new scenery; only just light enough had been let in for her to see her work. Felix and Mignon were sitting on the ground near her; they were holding a book between them, and while Mignon read aloud, Felix repeated every word after her, as if he knew the letters, and even understood how to read.

The children jumped up to welcome him; he embraced them most affectionately, and took them nearer to the old woman. "Was it you," he said gravely, "who brought this child to Aurelia?" She looked up from her

work and turned her face towards him; he saw it in the full light, was terrified, and started back: it was old Barbara!

"Where is Mariana?" he exclaimed.

"Far away from here," answered the old woman.

"And Felix?"—

"Is the son of that unfortunate girl who was only too faithful in her love. May you never feel the pain you have caused us! May the treasure which I am now giving into your hands make you as happy, as he has made us miserable!"

She rose to go away. Wilhelm held her fast. "I am not going to run away from you," she said; "I only want to fetch a paper, which will give you pleasure and pain at the same time."

She departed: Wilhelm looked at the boy with a hesitating anxious joy; he did not dare to call him his own yet. "He is yours!" cried Mignon, "he is yours!" and pressed the child against Wilhelm's knees.

The old woman came back, and gave him a letter. "Here are Mariana's last words," she said.

"She is dead!" he cried.

"Dead," said the old woman, "and I wish I had no need to reproach you."

Wilhelm opened the letter in surprise and bewilderment; he had scarcely read the first words, when such bitter grief overpowered him, that he threw himself on an imitation grassy bank, and remained lying there some time. Mignon tried to help him. Meanwhile Felix had picked up the letter, and pulled at his playfellow till she yielded, knelt down by him and read it to him. Felix repeated the words, so that Wilhelm was obliged to hear them twice over.

"If this letter ever reaches you, pity the unhappy girl

you used to love. Your love caused her death. The boy whose birth I shall survive only a few days, is yours. I die faithful to you, much as appearances may be against me; when I lost you I lost everything that bound me to life. I die content, as they assure me the child is healthy and will live. Listen to old Barbara, and forgive her; farewell, do not forget me!"

What a painful and yet, to his comfort, half enigmatical letter! It seemed only to come home to him fully as the children hesitated and stammered over the words, repeating them again and again.

"There! you've got it now!" exclaimed the old woman without waiting till he had recovered. "You may thank Heaven that after losing such a sweet girl, you have still a charming, beautiful child left! And when you hear how faithful that dear girl was to you till the very last—how wretched she was, and what she sacrificed for your sake, your grief and pain will be beyond all bounds."

"Then let me drink the cup of misery and joy at one draught!" exclaimed Wilhelm. "Only convince, or even persuade, me, that she was a good girl—that she deserved my respect as well as my love—and then you may leave me to my anguish for a loss which can never be repaired."

"This is not a fitting time," replied the old woman. "I am busy, and don't want to be seen with you. Don't tell any one that Felix is your son; the company would abuse me terribly for hiding it so long. Mignon will not betray us; she is a good girl, and can keep a secret."

"I have known it for a long time," said Mignon, "but I said nothing."

"How can that be possible?" cried the old woman.

"Who told you?" said Wilhelm in the same breath.

"The ghost told me."

"How? Where?"

"In the garden vault, when the old man took out his knife, something called to me, 'Fetch his father,' and then I thought of you."

"Who was it that called?"

"I don't know; I was so frightened in my heart and head—I trembled and prayed—then it called, and I understood it."

Wilhelm pressed her to his heart, entrusted Felix to her care and then went away. He had not noticed till then that she was much thinner and paler than when he left her. Madame Melina was the first of his acquaintances whom he found at home: she gave him a cordial welcome. "Oh! I hope," she exclaimed, "that you will find everything among us as you would have wished!"

"I doubt that," said Wilhelm, "and I am not expecting it. Confess now; has not every step been taken to enable you to do without me?"

"Why did you go away?" replied his friend.

"It is never too soon to learn how easily the world can dispense with our presence," said Wilhelm. "What important personages we believe ourselves to be! *We* are the life of the circle in which we move: without *us* life, and even breath itself—must come to a standstill! And yet, in reality, the gap made by our absence is scarcely noticed; it fills up again directly; often, indeed, it leaves room, if not for something better, at all events for something more agreeable."

"And we take no account of our friends' sorrow?"

"Our friends would do well, too, to reconcile themselves to our absence as soon as possible;—to say in their hearts: 'Wherever you are, and wherever you intend

to remain, do all you can; be active, kind and courteous, and enjoy the present.'"

Upon closer enquiry Wilhelm found that what he had expected was the case: the opera had been established, and was attracting the entire attention of the public. His own parts meanwhile had been given to Laertes and Horatio, both of whom succeeded in coaxing a far more vigorous applause out of the audience than he had ever been able to obtain.

Laertes came in, and Madame Melina exclaimed: "Look at this fortunate fellow! he'll soon be a capitalist, or something equally good,—Heaven knows what!"

As he embraced him, Wilhelm felt that his coat was of superfine cloth; the rest of his dress too, though simple, was of the best materials.

"What does this mean?" said Wilhelm.

"It's not too soon," said Laertes, "to hear that my rambling ways are beginning to pay at last. The head of a large commercial firm, finding he can make some profit out of my restless propensities, my information and various connexions, is willing to allow me a share of it, and I would give a good deal if I could buy back again some confidence in women at the same time; for there's a pretty niece in the house, and I can see clearly enough that if I chose I might soon be a made man."

"I dare say you do not know either," said Madame Melina, "that there has been a wedding among us since you left. Serlo has really been publicly married to the fair Elmira, as her father would allow of no clandestine intimacy."

Thus they chatted on about many things that had happened in Wilhelm's absence, and he could soon see that in the opinion and feeling of the company he had long ago received his dismissal.

He waited impatiently for old Barbara, who had fixed the time for her strange visit late in the night. She wished to come when every one else was asleep, and demanded as much preparation as if she had been a young girl stealing to her lover. While he was waiting, he read Mariana's letter over and over again—read with unspeakable ecstasy the word "faithful" written by her own dear hand, and with horror the mention of her death, of which she seemed to have no fear, even when feeling it draw near.

Midnight was past, when something rustled near the half-open door, and the old woman came in with a basket. "I am to tell you," she said, "the history of our sufferings, and I must expect that you will sit and hear it unmoved: that you are only waiting for me so anxiously in order to gratify your own curiosity, and now, as then, will screen yourself with the cloak of your own self-love, while our hearts are breaking. But look here! Just in this way I brought out the bottle of champagne on that happy night; just so I put the three glasses on the table, and you began to deceive us and lull us to sleep with pleasant nursery tales, just as I am now going to open your eyes and keep you awake with mournful truths."

When the old woman really drew the cork and filled the three glasses, Wilhelm did not know what to say.

"Drink!" she cried, after quickly draining her own foaming glass. "Drink, before the spirit has passed! that third glass shall foam away in remembrance of my unfortunate friend. How red her lips were then as she drank to your health! Ah! now they are pale and stiff for ever!"

"Sibyl! Fury!" shouted Wilhelm, springing up and striking the table with his fist. "What evil spirit pos-

sesses you? What do you take me for, that you think the simplest tale of Mariana's sufferings and death would not distress me enough, without your using these hellish arts to sharpen the torture? If you are such an insatiable glutton, that you must indulge yourself even at a funeral feast, then drink while you are speaking! I always abhorred you, and even now the very sight of you makes me think that Mariana could not have been innocent, if you were her companion."

"Gently, gently, my good sir!" replied the old creature. "You can't put me out of countenance. You are still deep in our debt, and people don't much fancy being railed at by their debtors. You're quite right, however: my story told as simply as possible will be punishment enough for you; so now, listen to the way in which Mariana fought and conquered in order to remain yours."

"Mine?" cried Wilhelm. "What story are you going to tell me now?"

"Don't interrupt me," she said; "listen to me, and then believe what you choose; though to be sure that can make no difference now. The last evening that you spent with us, did not you find a note and take it away with you?"

"I did not find it until after I had taken it away; it was wrapped up in a little necktie that I snatched up and put into my pocket in my intense love."

"What was in the letter?"

"A discontented lover's expectations of being better treated the next evening than he had been the day before. And that the promise was kept, I saw with my own eyes, for he crept out of your house just before daybreak."

"You may have seen him do that; but you have still

to learn what passed in doors—what a sad night Mariana passed, and all the annoyance I went through. I will be quite sincere—I will neither deny nor try to gloss over the fact, that I had persuaded Mariana to receive the visits of a certain Norberg. She consented—I ought rather to say—she obeyed me, but with repugnance. He was rich, he seemed in love with her, and I hoped he would prove constant. Soon after this he had to go on a journey, and Mariana became acquainted with you. What had not I to bear then—to prevent—to suffer patiently! She would sometimes exclaim: ‘Oh! if you had only spared my youth and innocence just four weeks longer, I should have found some one worthy of my love; I should have been worthy of him, and love would have given quietly and consciously what now I have sold against my will.’ She yielded entirely to her love for you; I need not ask whether you were happy. I had unlimited power over her mind, because I knew exactly how to gratify all her little fancies; but over her heart I had no power at all; she never approved of anything I did for her, or wished her to do, unless her heart consented; in such cases she would only yield to invincible necessity, and that necessity soon seemed very oppressive to her. During her early childhood she had never known want, but, by a complication of circumstances, her family lost their property; the poor girl had been accustomed to many indulgences, and certain good principles had been impressed on her young mind, which disquieted her, and yet did not help her to any great extent. She was not at all clever in worldly matters, and was innocent in the true meaning of the word; she had no idea that things could be bought without being paid for, and nothing frightened her more than the idea of being in debt; she would always rather give than

take, and it was only poverty that could have rendered it possible for her to sacrifice herself in order to get rid of a number of small debts."

"And could not you have saved her?" said Wilhelm angrily.

"Oh yes!" said the old woman; "by hunger and poverty, sorrow and privation; but I was not prepared for that kind of thing."

"You detestable, vile procuress! So that is the way in which you sacrificed the unfortunate girl! you offered her up to your own insatiable thirst and gluttony!"

"You had better moderate your anger, and leave off abusing me," answered the old woman. "If you want to revile, go to your grand, aristocratic houses; you'll find mothers there whose great anxiety it is to get hold of the basest and worst man for some charming, heavenly girl, if he only chances to be the richest. Look at the poor young thing, trembling and shuddering at her fate, and totally unable to find comfort, until some experienced female friend shows her that by marriage she acquires the right to dispose of her heart and her person as she chooses."

"Silence!" cried Wilhelm. "Do you suppose that one crime can excuse another? Tell the rest of your story without any comments!"

"Then you must listen without reproaches. Mariana became yours against my will; in that adventure at least I have nothing to blame myself for. Norberg came back, and hastened to see her; she received him coldly and fretfully, and would not even allow him a kiss. I used all my arts to excuse her conduct; I made him think that her confessor had awakened her conscience, and that so long as conscience speaks it ought to be respected. At last I succeeded in persuading him to go, and promised

to do my best with her. He was rich and rough, but good-natured at heart, and loved Mariana exceedingly. He promised to be patient, and I worked all the more eagerly in his cause, that his patience might not be too sorely tried. I had a hard battle with Mariana, but at last I persuaded (indeed, I may say forced) her by threats of leaving her to invite Norberg for the night. You came, and by chance caught up his answer in the little scarf. Your unexpected coming spoilt my game altogether. You were scarcely out of the house when the old torment began afresh. She swore that she could not be unfaithful to you, seemed almost beside herself, and was in such passionate distress, that I could not help pitying her from my heart. At last I promised her that for one night more at least I would pacify Norberg, and get rid of him under some pretext or other. I begged her to go to bed, but she did not seem to trust me, would not undress, and fell asleep at last in her clothes, excited and worn out with crying.

“Norberg came, and I tried to keep him back by representing her remorse and her conscientious scruples in the blackest colours. He wished just to see her, and I went into the bedroom to prepare her; he followed, and we both reached her bedside at the same moment. She awoke, sprang up wildly, and we could not hold her. She conjured and besought us with threats, entreaties and assurances that she would not yield. She was imprudent enough to let fall a few words about her real love, which poor Norberg was obliged to interpret in a religious sense. At last he left her, and she locked herself in. I kept him a long time with me, talking about her condition. I told him that the poor girl was expecting to become a mother, and must be treated gently. He was so proud of being a father, and so delighted at

the idea of having a boy of his own, that he agreed to do everything she wished, and promised rather to travel for a time than to distress his dear Mariana, and possibly injure her by too much agitation. In this state of mind he stole away at early dawn, and you, sir, who seem to have been standing sentry there, would have needed nothing more to make you perfectly happy, than a glance into the heart of the rival you fancied so favoured and so fortunate, that the very sight of him drove you to despair."

"Are you speaking the truth?" said Wilhelm.

"As surely as I am still hoping to drive you to despair," said the old creature. "Yes, indeed, you would feel desperate if I could only shew you the scene that took place the next morning as it really was. In what cheerful spirits she awoke! How kindly she called me in, and how earnestly she thanked me and pressed me to her heart! 'There,' she said, going up to her looking-glass with a smile, 'now I may enjoy looking at myself again—now that I am once more my own and his—my dear, only-loved friend's! How sweet it is to have conquered! What a heavenly feeling to do as your heart tells you! And I thank you so for having taken my side, and, at least for once, used all your shrewdness and good sense to help me. Stand by me still, and find out what can make me quite happy.'

"I gave way to her, I did not want to irritate her; I encouraged her hopes flatteringly, and she caressed me in the most charming way. If she left the window for a moment, I had to keep watch: she was sure that you would pass, and she must at least look at you. The whole day went by in this restless fashion. At night, at your usual hour, we felt certain you would come. I got tired of watching on the stairs, and went back to her.

To my surprise she was dressed in her officer's uniform; she looked wonderfully happy and lovely. 'Don't I deserve to wear a man's dress to-night?' she said. 'Didn't I hold out bravely? My dearest shall see me to-day as he did the first time; I will press him to my heart just as tenderly and with less constraint than I did then, for am I not much more his now, than before I had freed myself by a right resolution? And yet,' she went on after thinking a little, 'I have not quite won my battle; I must dare the worst before I can be worthy of him, or certain to possess him. I must tell him everything, reveal my whole condition to him, and then leave him to keep me or cast me away. I am preparing this scene for him and for myself, and if he feels capable of casting me off, I shall then be entirely my own again; I shall find comfort in my punishment, and bear everything patiently that fate may choose to lay upon me.'

"These were the thoughts and hopes, sir, with which that lovely girl was waiting for you. You never came. O, how shall I describe that time of waiting and hoping? I see you now before me, darling, speaking so warmly and lovingly of the man whose cruelty you had not then experienced."

"Good, dear Barbara!" cried Wilhelm, springing up and seizing the old woman's hand, "now we have had quite enough deception and preparation. Your indifferent, calm, contented tone has betrayed you. Give me Mariana again; she is living—she is near us! You have not chosen this late, lonely hour for your visit in vain; nor in vain prepared me by that charming story. Where is she? where have you hidden her? If you will only let me see her—only bring her back once more to my arms, I shall believe everything—I promise to believe everything. I saw her shadow fly past me once; let me clasp

her once more in my arms! I will fall on my knees before her, I will entreat her to forgive me; I will congratulate her on her successful struggle—on her victory over herself and over you; I will lead my little Felix to her. Come, say where you have hidden her! Don't leave *her*—don't leave me any longer in suspense! You have attained your object; tell me, where have you concealed her? Come and let me throw the light of this candle on her, so that I may see her lovely face again!"

He had dragged the old woman off her chair; she stared at him fixedly, tears burst from her eyes, and she was seized by a fearful agony. "It is a most unhappy error," she said, "that gives you even a single moment more of hope. Yes, indeed, I have hidden her, but it is under the ground; neither the light of the sun nor even the rays of a friendly candle will ever fall on that sweet face again. Take that good little Felix to her grave and say to him: 'There lies your mother; your father condemned her unheard.' That dear heart is not beating with impatience to see you now; she is not waiting in some neighbouring room to know the result of my story—or my made-up tale; that dark chamber has received her into which no bridegroom can follow, and out of which no one can ever come to meet him she loves best."

She threw herself on the ground and wept bitterly; Wilhelm for the first time felt perfectly convinced that Mariana was dead; those were miserable moments for him. The old woman rose; "I have nothing more to tell you," she exclaimed, throwing a packet on to the table; "I hope these letters will make you thoroughly ashamed of your cruelty. Read them with dry eyes, if you can." She stole softly away, and that night Wilhelm had not the heart to open the pocket-book; it had been his own present to Mariana, and he knew that she

had treasured up in it every tiny note that she had received from him. The next morning however he prevailed upon himself to do it, and on untying the ribbon, a number of little notes, written in pencil with his own hand, fell out, recalling every separate event, from the first day of their pleasant acquaintance to the last which had separated them so cruelly. But what caused him the most acute suffering, was the reading of a collection of little letters written to himself, the contents of which showed that they had been sent back by Werner.

“Not one of my letters has been able to force its way to you; my prayers and entreaties have never reached you; did you give these cruel orders yourself? Am I never to see you again? I am going to try once more. Oh, do come, I entreat you! I will not ask you to stay, if I may only press you once more to my heart.”

“When I used to sit by your side, holding your hands, looking into your eyes, and saying with my heart full of love and confidence: ‘Dear, dear good husband!’ you were so pleased with the words, that I had to say them over and over again. I repeat them now: ‘Dear, dear, kind husband, be as good as you used to be—come, and do not let me perish in my misery.’”

“You believe me guilty: so I am, but not in the way you think. Come, that I may feel the one comfort of having been fully understood by you, let what may, happen afterwards.”

"Not for my sake alone, but for your own, I entreat you to come. I feel the intolerable anguish which it is costing you to fly from me: come back, that our separation may not be so cruel! Perhaps I was never worthy of you, except in the very moment when you thrust me from you into boundless wretchedness."

"I call upon you by everything that is holy—by everything that can touch a human heart! It concerns a soul, a life—nay, two lives, one of which must always be dear to you. Your suspicions will refuse to believe this too, and yet in the hour of my death I will declare: the child that I am now carrying beneath my heart is yours. Since I first loved you no one else has even pressed my hand. Oh, that your love—that your right principle, had been the companions of my youth!"

"You will not hear me? then at last I must be silent; but these letters shall not perish. Perhaps they may still speak to you, when my lips are covered by the shroud, and the voice of your repentance can no longer reach my ears. Up to the last moment of my sad life, this will be my only comfort: that though I dare not call myself quite innocent, I have never sinned against *you*."

Wilhelm could not go on; he gave way to his grief, and his distress was increased by the sudden appearance of Laertes, before whom he tried to hide his feelings. Laertes produced a purse of ducats, and began counting them over and reckoning, at the same time assuring Wilhelm there was no pleasure in the world

like getting rich: once on the road to wealth, nothing can disturb or stop you. Wilhelm remembered his dream, and smiled; but in the same moment he remembered too with a shudder, that in that very dream Mariana had left him to follow his dead father, and that both of them at last had floated round the garden like ghosts.

Laertes roused him from his reverie, and took him to a coffee house; there a number of persons with whom he had been a favourite on the stage, gathered round him directly. They expressed their great pleasure at seeing him, regretting at the same time that, as they had heard, he thought of leaving the stage. They spoke so decidedly and sensibly about himself and his acting, the grade and extent of his talent, and their own hopes with respect to him, that Wilhelm, at last, and not without emotion, exclaimed: "Oh, how infinitely precious this praise would have been to me a few months ago! How it would have taught and encouraged me! I should never have turned my mind so completely from the stage, and never have gone so far as to despair of the public."

"Things never ought to come to that pass," said an elderly man stepping forward. "The public is large; correct judgment and feeling are not so rare as people fancy; only artists ought never to require an unqualified approbation of their performances. Just that unqualified praise is worth less than any other, but yet you gentlemen do not like it qualified. I know very well that in life, as well as in art, a man must take counsel of himself when he has anything to do or to produce; when it is once done or produced, however, he ought to listen attentively to the voices of the many, and with a little practice he will soon be able to form a complete judgment from their various opinions. This he must do,

for those who could spare him that trouble are generally silent enough."

"Just what they ought not to be," said Wilhelm. "How often I have heard people silent themselves in reference to good work, and yet complaining and murmuring that others did not speak!"

"Well, at all events we will let our voices be heard to-day," cried a young man. "You must dine with us, and we will try and make up for all we have so often failed in to you, and sometimes to poor Aurelia as well."

Wilhelm declined their invitation politely, and went to see Madame Melina; he thought of taking the children away, and wished to speak with her about the matter.

The old woman's secret was not very safe in his keeping; he betrayed himself the moment he caught sight of the beautiful little Felix. "Oh, my child! my dear child!" he exclaimed, taking him up and pressing him to his heart. "Father, what have you brought me?" cried the boy, while Mignon stood looking as if she longed to warn them both.

"What new apparition is this?" said Madame Melina. They sent the children away, and then Wilhelm, who did not believe himself bound to keep old Barbara's secret strictly, revealed the whole affair to his friend. Madame Melina looked at him and smiled. "Oh, you credulous men!" she exclaimed; "let anything only lie in your way, and it is easy enough to saddle you with it; but you make ample amends the next time, by looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, and determining not to care for anything on which you have not already set the mark of an arbitrary passion." As she said this she could not repress a sigh, and if Wilhelm had not been perfectly

blind he must have seen the signs of an affection which had never yet been entirely subdued.

He began to talk to her about the children—how he thought of keeping Felix with him, and sending Mignon into the country. Madame Melina, though sorry to lose both of them at once, thought the proposal good, and indeed, necessary. Felix, she said, was running wild with her, and Mignon seemed to need fresh air and a change of some kind: the good, dear child, was sickly and could not rally.

“Don't let my carelessly uttered doubt, as to whether the child belongs to you or not, lead you astray,” she went on. “Certainly very little dependence can be placed on that old woman; and yet even people who invent falsehoods for their own benefit can occasionally speak the truth when it suits them. She deluded Aurelia into believing that Felix was Lothario's son, and we women have this peculiarity: we are very fond of our lovers' children, even when we do not know their mothers, or hate them with all our hearts.” Felix came jumping into the room, and she kissed and hugged him much more affectionately than was usual with her.

Wilhelm went home quickly, and sent for the old woman; she would not promise however to visit him before dusk. When she came, he received her with a look of great annoyance: “There is nothing in the world,” he began, “more infamous than a traffic in lies and got-up stories! You have caused a great deal of mischief by such things already, and now, when the very happiness of my life depends on your words, I am forced to wait in suspense, and dare not take the child to my arms; though to know without a doubt that he were my own son would make me happy beyond measure. I can't

look at you, you abominable creature, without hatred and contempt."

"If I were to speak my mind," said the old woman, "your conduct seems to me simply unbearable. Why, if he were not your own son, he's the most beautiful, charming child in the world—a child that one would be delighted to buy at any price, only to have him always about one. Isn't it worth your while to adopt him? Don't I deserve a small annuity for the rest of my life for all my trouble, and the care I have taken of him? Oh, it's all very well for you gentlemen, who want for nothing, to talk about truth and straightforwardness; but how a poor creature who has got nothing to meet her smallest wants—who in her difficulties has no friend, no advice, no help—how such a poor thing pushes her way through this selfish world, and is often forced to starve in silence—that would make a pretty story if any of you fine gentlemen had ears to hear it. Have you read Mariana's letters? She wrote them in that miserable time. I tried in vain to get to you and put those letters in your hands; but your cruel brother-in-law had so completely hemmed you in on every side, that all my craft and cunning were useless, and at last, when he threatened to have us both put in gaol, I was obliged to give up all hope. Does not everything in the letters agree with what I told you? And does not Norberg's letter put the whole matter beyond doubt?"

"What letter?" enquired Wilhelm.

"Didn't you find it in the pocket-book?" replied the old woman.

"I have not read them all yet."

"Then give me the pocket-book. Everything depends on that letter. It was Norberg's unfortunate note that threw everything into confusion, and if the thread is still

worth anything, another from the same hand may as well untie the knot." She took a letter out of the pocket-book: Wilhelm recognised that hated writing, but he controlled himself and read:

"Only tell me, girl, how did you manage to get this power over me? Why, I would not have believed that a goddess herself could ever have turned *me* into a sighing lover. But, instead of meeting me with open arms, you draw back; really, from the way you behaved, one might have fancied you disliked me. Is it fair that I should have to pass the night sitting on a trunk with old Barbara in the little lumber-room, while my darling girl was only two doors off? I must say it is too bad. I have promised to leave you time for consideration, and not to urge you, though every lost quarter of an hour makes me almost mad. Have not I given you everything I could think of as far as I was able? Do you still doubt my love? Only say what you would like; you shall want for nothing. I only wish the priest that put such stuff into your head might be struck dumb and blind. And that you should just happen to hit on one of that stamp! There are so many who know how to make allowances for young people. Well, I have said enough; but remember, things must not go on in this way; I shall expect an answer in a few days, for I must go away soon, and if you are not amiable and pleasant, as you used to be, you will not see me again . . ."

The letter went on in this style for some time longer, harping, to Wilhelm's painful satisfaction, continually on the same point, and testifying to the truth of Barbara's story. Another note clearly proved that Mariana had remained firm to her purpose; and from these and various other papers, Wilhelm gathered, not without acute suffering,

the history of this unfortunate girl up to the hour of her death.

Old Barbara had gradually tamed the rough fellow, by telling him of Mariana's death, and allowing him to believe that Felix was his son; he had sent her money several times, but this she had kept for herself, having persuaded Aurelia by her stories into taking charge of the boy's education. This secret source of gain however unfortunately had not lasted long, for Norberg had wasted the greater part of his property in riotous living, and repeated love-affairs had hardened his heart against his supposed first-born son.

Probable as all this sounded, and beautifully as the parts of the story corresponded with each other, Wilhelm did not dare to give way to his joy yet; he seemed to fear a gift that was offered to him by such an evil genius.

"Your unbelief," said the old woman, guessing his state of mind, "can only be cured by time. Look at the child as if he did not belong to you, and watch him all the more narrowly; notice his talents, his disposition, his capabilities; if you do not by degrees recognise yourself in him, I can only say you must have very bad eyes indeed. You may be quite certain that, if I were a man, no one should ever foist a child upon me; but it's a fortunate thing for the women that men are not so quick-sighted in such matters."

After hearing all this, Wilhelm came to an arrangement with the old woman. He wished to keep Felix, and she was to take Mignon to Therèse, after doing which she might go and live where she liked, he promising to allow her a small annuity.

He sent for Mignon to prepare her for these changes. "Master," she said, "let me stay with you. It will make me happy and sad too,"

He represented to her that she was getting older now, and something more must be done for her education. "I am educated enough to love and grieve," she answered.

He drew her attention to her health, telling her that she needed constant care, and the advice of a clever physician. "Why should people care about me," she said, "when there is so much else to care about?"

He took great pains to convince her that he could not take her with him now, but that she should be placed where he should often see her; she seemed not even to hear what he was saying. "You do not want to have me with you?" she said; "perhaps it is better; send me to the old harper, the poor man is so alone there."

Wilhelm tried to make her understand that the old harper was being well cared for. "I long for him every hour," the child answered.

"I did not notice that you were so fond of him when he was living with us," said Wilhelm.

"I was afraid of him when he was awake; it was only his eyes that I could not look at; but when he was asleep I was fond of sitting by his side; I used to keep the flies away from him, and was never tired of looking at him. Oh, he has helped me in such dreadful moments! No one knows what I owe him. If I had only known the way, I should have gone to him before."

Wilhelm made all the circumstances clear to her with great minuteness, telling her she was such a reasonable child that this time too she must try and do as he wished.

"Reason is cruel," she answered; "the heart is better.

I will go wherever you like, only leave me your little Felix!"

As after much discussion she still remained firm to her point, Wilhelm was at last forced to decide on entrusting both the children to the old woman, and sending them together to Therèse. The fact that he was still afraid to look on the beautiful Felix as his own son, made this resolution somewhat easier to him. He would take the child up in his arms and carry him about; the little fellow liked to be held before the looking-glass, and without confessing it to himself, Wilhelm enjoyed doing this, and trying to discover resemblances between himself and the boy. If for a moment his fatherhood seemed really probable, he would press the child close to his heart; and then suddenly, terrified by the thought that he might after all be deceiving himself, would put him down, and let him run away. "Oh!" he cried, "if I were to appropriate this priceless treasure, and he were afterwards to be wrested from me, I should be the most miserable of men!"

The children had started on their journey, and Wilhelm was thinking of taking a formal leave of the stage, when it struck him that he had in reality retired from it already, and there was nothing more to do than go. Mariana was no more; his two guardian angels had left him, and his thoughts were already hastening after them. The beautiful boy floated before his imagination like a charming, uncertain vision; he saw him running about the woods and fields, holding Therèse's hand, and becoming formed and cultivated under the influence of an open-hearted, cheerful companion, in the free, fresh air. Therèse was worth much more to him now that he could think of the child in her society. Even while sitting as a spectator in the theatre, a smile would cross

his face when he remembered her: he had almost reached the same point—the representations brought no illusions for him either.

Serlo and Melina were extremely polite to him, as soon as they found that he laid no claim to his former position. A portion of the public wished to see him on the stage once more, but this would have been impossible to him, and none of the actors wished it, except perhaps Frau Melina.

Wilhelm really took leave of this friend now; he felt the parting, and said: "If people were only not so presumptuous as to make promises for the future! It does not lie in their power to keep even the most trifling ones, much less those which are of any importance. How ashamed I feel, when I remember my promises on that unhappy night as we all lay crowded together in a wretched inn—robbed, ill, wounded and hurt! How misfortune seemed to raise my courage! I looked on my own good intentions as a perfect treasure in themselves. And it has all resulted in nothing—literally nothing! I leave you as your debtor, and it is fortunate for me that my promises were never taken for more than they were worth, and that no one has ever reminded me of them."

"Do not be unjust to yourself," replied Madame Melina. "If no one else should acknowledge the services you rendered us, I at least shall never undervalue them. Our entire position would have been different in every respect, if we had been without you. It is just the same with our intentions as with our wishes; when they have been carried out and fulfilled, they look so different from what we expected, that we fancy we have done nothing—gained nothing."

"Ah!" said Wilhelm, "you will not succeed in quieting my conscience by your friendly interpretations; I shall always feel myself your debtor."

"And it is very possible that you are so," answered Madame Melina; "but not in the way you think. We always reckon it a disgrace not to fulfil a promise we have made by word of mouth. Ah! my friend, the very presence of a good man is a promise, and too large a one. The confidence he excites in others, the affection he inspires, the hopes he brings to life, are boundless; he is and must always be a debtor without knowing it. Farewell! Though our outward circumstances have been happily re-established under your guidance, your departure will leave a void in my own mind and heart, which will not so easily be filled up again."

Before leaving the town Wilhelm wrote another long and circumstantial letter to Werner. They had formerly corresponded, but finding a constant difference of opinion, had at last left off writing. Now however Wilhelm took the first step towards a renewal of intimacy; he was about to do what Werner had so much wished, and could say: "I am going to leave the stage, and to form connexions with men whose society in every sense must lead me into a course of pure and steady action." He enquired too about his own property: indeed, it seemed strange to him now that he had let the matter rest so long uncared for. He did not know that a total neglect of outward circumstances is characteristic of those who are earnestly bent on their inward improvement. This had been Wilhelm's case, and he seemed now for the first time to be aware, that, in order to effect anything lasting, outward means are necessary. His tone of mind on beginning his journey now, was entirely different from

what it had been the first time; the prospect he saw before him was delightful, and he hoped to meet some agreeable incidents on the way.

CHAPTER IX.

ON coming back to Lothario's estate, he found that a great change had taken place. Jarno met him with the news that Lothario's uncle was dead, and he had gone to take possession of his inheritance. "You have come just at the right moment," he said, "to help us. Lothario has commissioned me and the Abbé to buy some considerable property in this neighbourhood; the matter had been put in train some time ago, and now we have found both money and credit in the very nick of time. The only objection to the purchase lay in the fact that a commercial firm at some distance had their eye on the same estates; we have resolved however to make common cause with them, and so avoid foolishly and needlessly running up the price. It seems we have to do with a clever man. We are making calculations and estimates, and we have also, from an economical point of view, to consider how the estates may best be divided so that each shall have a fine property." The papers were laid before Wilhelm, and the fields, meadows and houses inspected, but though Jarno and the Abbé seemed to understand the matter very fairly, Wilhelm could not help wishing that Fräulein Therèse had been of the party.

This work occupied several days, so that Wilhelm had scarcely time to give his friends an account of his adventures and his possible fatherhood, and when he did,

they treated this, to him so weighty event, with indifference and levity.

He had noticed that sometimes when they were talking confidentially together, at table or out walking, they would stop short and turn the conversation; this proved that they had matters in hand which were secrets from him. He remembered Lydia's words, and the fact that one side of the castle had hitherto been entirely inaccessible to him, strengthened his belief in them. He had never yet been able to find an entrance to certain galleries, and more especially to the old tower, though he knew it well enough from the outside.

One evening Jarno said to him: "We can look upon you now so safely as one of ourselves, that it would be unfair not to admit you to a nearer acquaintance with our secrets. At a man's first entrance into the world it is well that he should think highly of himself, should look forward to gaining various advantages, and try to bring everything within the bounds of possibility; but when he has reached a certain degree of cultivation he must, for his own profit, learn to lose himself in the mass—learn to live for the sake of others, and forget himself in some active work dictated by duty. In this way he will come to a knowledge of himself; for it is really in action that one man can be compared with another. You shall soon learn what a little world is lying close to you, and how well you are known in it; be dressed and ready to-morrow morning before sunrise."

Jarno came at the appointed hour, led him through several rooms in the castle, some of which were known, and others strange to him, and then through different galleries, until at last they reached a large old door strongly clamped with iron. At this door Jarno knocked; it opened a little way—just enough for one person to

pass through. Jarno pushed Wilhelm in, but did not follow him. Wilhelm found himself in a dark and narrow chamber; there was no light, and when he tried to move he met some resisting object. A voice, that was not quite strange to him, cried: "Enter!" and then he saw that the sides of the chamber in which he was standing, were only hung with tapestry, through which a faint light glimmered. "Enter!" cried the voice again, and Wilhelm raised the tapestry and went in.

The hall in which he now stood seemed to have been a chapel formerly; instead of the altar, a large table covered with a green cloth was placed on some steps, and a curtain above it seemed to have been drawn together to cover a painting; on each side were some cabinets of beautiful workmanship, with doors of delicate wire-work, such as we see in libraries; but instead of books Wilhelm could only see many rolls of paper on the shelves. There was no one in the hall; and the rising sun streaming through the painted windows shone directly on Wilhelm's face, and wished him a friendly good morning.

"Sit down!" cried a voice that seemed to come from the altar. Wilhelm seated himself in a small arm-chair, which stood against a partition that barred the entrance; there was no other seat in the whole room, so he was obliged to content himself with this one, though the morning sun dazzled him; the chair was fixed, he could only shade his eyes with his hand.

Meanwhile the curtains rustled slightly and parted, disclosing a dark empty opening surrounded by a frame. A man in every-day dress appeared within it, bowed to Wilhelm and said: "Do not you recognise me? Among other things that you wish to know, would not you like to learn where your grandfather's collection is now?"

Have you forgotten the picture that used to charm you so much? Where may the sick prince chance to be languishing now?"

Wilhelm easily recognised the stranger who had talked to him in the tavern on that eventful night. "Perhaps," continued he, "we should find it easier now to agree on the subject of destiny and character."

Wilhelm was just going to answer, when the curtains quickly drew together again. "Strange!" he said to himself. "Can accidental occurrences like these have any connexion; and can what we call destiny turn out to be mere chance? Where may my grandfather's collection be now? and why do they remind me of it at such a solemn moment as this?"

He had no time to follow this train of thought, for the curtains opened again, and a man stood before him, whom he recognised at once as the country-clergyman who had joined their merry water-party. He was like the Abbé, and yet did not seem to be he. With a cheerful face and a dignified expression the man began: "The duty of an educator is not to preserve from error, but to guide the erring—indeed, it is wisdom in the teacher to let him take a deep draught of his error. The man who only tastes his folly will be sparing of it, and enjoy it as a rare pleasure, while he who drinks it to the dregs *must* learn to know it, unless he be a mad-man." The curtains closed again, and Wilhelm had time to think. "What error can the man be speaking of," he said to himself, "if not of the one that has pursued me all my life?—that I looked for culture where it did not exist, and imagined I could acquire a talent for which I had not the smallest natural disposition."

The curtains opened more hurriedly this time, and an officer appeared; he only said in passing: "Learn to

know the people you can safely trust." When they closed, it did not take Wilhelm long to remember that this was the officer who had embraced him in the Count's park, and whose fault it was that he had taken Jarno to be a recruiting-officer. Who he was, and how he came to be there, was to Wilhelm a perfect riddle.—"If so many people took an interest in me, knew the course my life was taking, and what ought to be done in such a case, why were not they stricter and more serious with me? Why did they encourage my vagaries instead of inducing me to give them up?"

"Do not reason with us!" said a voice. "You are saved and on your road to the goal. You will regret none of your follies, nor wish that one could be undone; a happier lot could have fallen to no human being." The curtains were then violently drawn asunder, and before him, in the empty space, stood the old king of Denmark, armed from head to foot. "I am the spirit of your father," said the form, "and can depart in peace now that my wishes for you have been fulfilled, even beyond my own comprehension. Steep mountains must be climbed by crooked paths; on the plains, straight roads lead from one place to another. Farewell: think of me when you are enjoying what I have prepared for you."

Wilhelm was astonished and perplexed: he really believed he had been listening to his father's voice, and yet it was not his. He was utterly confused by the present when combined with his recollections of the past.

He had not meditated long, before the Abbé came forward, and stationed himself behind the green table. "Come hither!" he cried to his astonished friend. Wilhelm did so, and went up the steps. A small roll lay on the green cloth. "Here are your indentures," said

the Abbé; "take them to heart; their contents are weighty." Wilhelm took up the roll, opened it and read as follows:

I N D E N T U R E S.

Art is long, life short, judgment difficult, opportunity fleeting. Action is easy, thought difficult: to act upon our thoughts troublesome. Beginnings are always cheerful; the threshold is the place of expectation. A boy is full of wonder; he is decided by impressions; he learns in play, and seriousness takes him by surprise. Imitation is inborn in us, but we do not easily perceive what ought to be imitated. Excellence is seldom found, and still more seldom treasured. The height charms us, but not the steps up to it; while gazing at the summit, we enjoy walking on the plain beneath. Only a part of art can be taught; the artist needs it all. Those who are only half acquainted with it are never certain, and talk a great deal; those who know it thoroughly, only care to do their work, and are slow to speak. The former have no secrets and no power; their doctrine is like baked bread, savoury and satisfying for the day; but flour cannot be sown, and seed-corn ought not to be ground. Words are good, but there is something better still. What is best cannot be explained by words. The spirit that moves us to action is the highest. The action is conceived by the spirit only, and re-produced. No one knows what he is doing when he is acting rightly, but we are always conscious of wrong in ourselves. He who works by signs only, is either a pedant, a hypocrite or a bungler. There are many such, and they hang together. Their empty talk hinders beginners, and their persistent mediocrity distresses the most advanced. The

teaching of a real artist opens the mind, for where words are wanting his deeds speak. The real scholar learns to extract the unknown out of the known, and so draws nearer to the master.‡

"That is enough!" cried the Abbé; "the rest in its season. Now look into those cabinets."

Wilhelm went up to them, and read the titles of the rolls. To his surprise he found *Lothario's Apprenticeship*, *Jarno's Apprenticeship* and his own *Apprenticeship* there, among a number of others whose names were unknown to him.

"May I hope to be allowed to look into these rolls?"

"From the present moment nothing in this room is closed for you."

"May I ask a question?"

"Without hesitation! and if it concerns a matter which lies, and ought to lie, nearest to your heart, you may look for a decisive answer."

"Well then, you strange and wise seers into so many secrets, can you tell me whether Felix is really my son?"

"Hail to you for this question!" cried the Abbé, clapping his hands for joy, "Felix is your son! I swear to you by the most sacred mysteries that lie hidden among us, he is your son; and, judged by her mind, his dead mother was not unworthy of you. Receive this lovely child from our hands, turn round and dare to be happy."

Wilhelm heard something rustle behind him; he turned round and saw a child's face peeping roguishly through the tapestry that covered the entrance: it was

Felix. The moment he found they had seen him, he hid himself playfully. "Come out!" cried the Abbé. He ran towards them, his father rushed to meet him, took him up in his arms and pressed him to his heart, exclaiming: "Yes, I feel that you are mine. What a gift from Heaven I have to thank my friends for! Where did you come from, my child, just at this moment?"

"Do not ask," said the Abbé. "Hail to you, young man! Your Apprenticeship is over; Nature has pronounced you free."

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I.

FELIX had run into the garden, Wilhelm followed him in ecstasy; a most lovely morning gave fresh charms to everything, and the moment was a very happy one for him. This free and glorious world was new to Felix, and his father knew little more than himself of the various objects, about which the little fellow was never tired of asking questions. At last they went to the gardener, and made him explain the name and use of different plants; Wilhelm was looking at nature through a new organ, and the child's curiosity and eagerness for information first made him conscious of the feeble interest he had hitherto taken in the things outside himself, and how limited and shallow his knowledge was. His own education seemed to begin on this, the happiest day of his life, and the very fact that he was required to teach another, made him feel the necessity of teaching himself.

Jarno and the Abbé had disappeared; they returned in the evening, bringing a stranger with them. Wilhelm was astounded; he could not trust his eyes; it was Werner; and he too hesitated an instant before acknowledging Wilhelm. They embraced each other most affectionately, and neither of them could hide his feeling that he thought the other altered. Werner maintained that his friend was taller, stouter and more upright, his manners more cultivated and his behaviour more agreeable. "But I miss something of his old open-heartedness," he added.

"That will come back again when we have recovered from our first surprise," said Wilhelm.

The impression made upon Wilhelm by Werner, was by no means so favourable. The good man seemed rather to have gone backward than forward. He was much thinner than formerly; his sharp face seemed more pointed, and his nose longer than ever; his temples and the top of his head bald, his voice high, impatient and shrill; while his sunken chest, stooping shoulders and pale cheeks, left no room for doubt that you had an overworked hypochondriac before you.

Wilhelm was modest enough to say very little about this change, especially as Werner, on the other hand, gave full vent to his friendly joy. "Well, I must say," he exclaimed, "that though you may have been wasting your time, and, as I suspect, earning nothing, you have meanwhile become a personage that cannot fail to make his fortune. Now pray don't idle and squander that away too; why with that figure you ought to buy some wealthy, handsome heiress."

"I see," said Wilhelm smiling, "you won't belie your old character. You have scarcely met your friend again, after such a long absence, before you begin to look at him as a piece of merchandise—something to speculate with, and make a profit by."

Jarno and the Abbé did not seem at all surprised at this recognition, and left the two friends to talk over the past and present at pleasure. Werner walked round and round his friend, turning him first this way and then that, so as almost to embarrass him. "No, really!" he exclaimed, "I never met with anything like this before, and yet I know I am not deceived. Your eyes are deeper and fuller, your forehead is broader, your nose more delicate,

and your mouth sweeter than it used to be. Only look at the fellow as he stands there!—it's all of a piece. Well, really, idling seems to thrive marvellously. And there am I, poor devil of a fellow,"—and he looked at himself in the glass—"why, if I had not been making plenty of money all this time, I should be worth simply nothing."

Werner had not received Wilhelm's last letter; the firm, in partnership with which Lothario proposed to buy the estate, was theirs, and Werner had come thither to transact this business, without a thought of meeting Wilhelm. The lawyer came, the papers were laid before them, and Werner thought their proposals reasonable. "If you mean well by this young man," he said, "and it looks as if you did, you yourselves must see to it that we are not losers. It shall depend on my friend, whether he will take this land, and spend part of his capital on it." Jarno and the Abbé assured him that they did not need this reminder. They had scarcely discussed the matter in the most general way, when Werner began to long for a game at *l'Hombre*, and to this the Abbé and Jarno at once seated themselves with him. He had become so accustomed to cards, that he could not pass an evening without them.

When the two friends were alone after supper they asked one another many questions, and eagerly talked over all they had to hear and tell. Wilhelm praised his present circumstances, and his good fortune in being taken up by such first-rate people. On hearing this, Werner shook his head, saying: "Well, I see one ought to believe nothing that one does not see with one's own eyes. Why, more than one officious friend has assured me that you were living with a dissolute young nobleman, bringing him actresses, helping him to

spend his money, and keeping him in hot water with all his relations."

"If my theatrical career had not reconciled me to every kind of calumny, I should be annoyed at our being so misunderstood," said Wilhelm, "both for my own and my good friends' sake; but how can people be expected to judge actions correctly, of which they only see isolated and broken fragments—of which, indeed, they see but the smallest portion, because the good and evil take place in secret, and in most cases nothing comes to light but what is insignificant and devoid of interest. Why, we set actors and actresses before the public on a raised stage, and light it up on all sides; the whole affair is condensed into the short space of a few hours, and yet it is very seldom that any one really knows what to make of it."

Then Wilhelm began to ask after the family, the friends of his youth, and his native town. Werner ran over the whole quickly, telling what was changed, what still remained, and what was then taking place there. "The women at home," he said, "are contented and cheerful, for there is never any want of money. They spend half their time in dressing, and the other half in exhibiting themselves when they are dressed, and they are very fair housekeepers. My children promise to be sharp lads. In imagination I see them already sitting at their desks, writing and reckoning; I can fancy them buying, bargaining and speculating; as soon as possible each of them shall begin on his own account, and as to our property, that really will give you pleasure. Directly matters are settled here, you must come home with me; for you really seem able now to take a sensible part in human affairs. Your new friends are much to be praised for having put you on the right track. I'm an old fool

—I see now how fond I am of you, for I can't take my eyes off your face; you look so well and handsome. It's quite another thing from that likeness you once sent your sister, and about which there were such discussions at home. Mother and daughter thought the young gentleman, with his bare throat and half-open chest, broad ruff, long locks, round hat, short vest and loose trousers, perfectly charming, while I maintained that the costume was only one remove from a mountebank's. Now you really look like a man; with one exception, however—you must tie your hair up in a periwig, or they'll take you for a Jew, and demand toll and tribute."

While they were talking, Felix had come into the room, and, finding that no one noticed him, had fallen asleep on the sofa. "Whose brat is that?" asked Werner. At that moment Wilhelm had not courage to tell the truth, nor any inclination to relate the still doubtful story to a man who was naturally anything but credulous.

The whole party then went to inspect the new estates, and conclude their bargain. Wilhelm kept Felix close to his side; for the boy's sake he looked forward with delight to this new property. The child's longing for the ripening berries and cherries reminded him of his own early days, and of a father's manifold duties in preparing, procuring and keeping up a supply of enjoyment for his children. With what interest he looked at the plantations and buildings! How eagerly he planned repairs and restoration! He had ceased to look at the world as if he were a bird of passage—or at the buildings upon its surface as mere bowers of leaves, hastily put together and withering before we quit them. Everything he planned was to mature for his boy, and whatever he built was to last for generations. In this sense his apprenticeship was ended:—with the feelings of a

father he had gained all the virtues of a citizen. He felt this, and nothing could compare with his joy. "O! how needlessly strict are the teachings of morality!" he would exclaim, "when Nature in her own sweet way trains us to all we ought to be! How strange are the demands made upon us by society! It begins by misleading and perplexing, and then exacts more than even Nature herself. Away with all methods of education that destroy the most effectual agents of true education, and direct us to the end instead of making us happy on the way to it!"

Much as he had already seen in his life, it still appeared to him as if human nature became clear to his mind only by observing the child. The theatre, and the world too, had seemed to him nothing more than a number of thrown dice, each single one of which showed sometimes more, sometimes less value on its upturned surface, though, when all reckoned together, they certainly make up a total. Here, however, in the child, a single die lay before him, on whose many sides the worth of human nature, as well as its worthlessness, were clearly engraved.

The child's desire to distinguish one object from another grew with every day: having learnt that things had names, he wanted to know the name of everything, and believing implicitly in his father's universal knowledge, often teased him with questions. This led Wilhelm to make enquiries about objects to which as yet he had given little attention. Man's natural impulse to learn the origin and end of things showed itself, too, betimes in the boy, and when he asked where the wind came from and where the flame went to, Wilhelm felt for the first time how circumscribed was his own knowledge. He began to wonder how far human beings might venture to send

their thoughts, and of what subjects they might hope ever to be able to give account to themselves and others. The boy's indignation at seeing wrong done to any living creature, highly delighted his father: he looked on it as the proof of an excellent disposition, when Felix tried to strike the kitchen-maid violently for having cut off the heads of some pigeons. To be sure, this delightful idea was soon swept away, when he found the child ruthlessly killing frogs and pulling butterflies to pieces; and this last feature reminded him of many people who seem so wonderfully just, when,—not being at the moment under the influence of passion themselves,—they are commenting on the actions of others.

The agreeable feeling that the boy was exercising such a beautiful and true influence on himself was momentarily disturbed by Wilhelm's perceiving that, in fact, the child was training him more than he the child. He had nothing to find fault with in the boy; it was not in his power to guide his mind in any direction but what it spontaneously took, and even the bad habits which Aurelia had worked so hard to conquer, seemed to have claimed their old rights again now that this friend was dead. He still never shut the door behind him, would not finish the food that was put upon his plate, and was never happier than when allowed to help himself direct from the dish, or leave his full glass and drink out of the bottle. He was charming too, sometimes, when, seating himself in the corner with a book, he would say very gravely: "I must study this learned stuff," though he neither could nor would distinguish even one letter from another.

When Wilhelm thought how little he had done for the child hitherto, and how little he was able to do for him, a restless feeling arose in his mind that seemed as

if it would outweigh all his present happiness. "Are we men, then," he would say, "so innately selfish, that we cannot care for anybody but ourselves? Am I not just acting towards the boy as I did to Mignon? I attracted that dear child to myself, enjoyed having her near me, and yet neglected her in the most cruel way. She was striving to educate herself;—did I do the least to help her? No! I left her to herself, and to all the random chances to which she could possibly be exposed among that uncultivated set of people. And now for this boy, who interested you so much even before he could be as dear and precious as he is now, did your heart ever once bid you to do him even the smallest service? You have wasted your own and others' years long enough; rouse yourself, and think what you have to do both for yourself and for these good little creatures, who are knit so closely to you by nature and affection."

This soliloquy was in fact only a preface to the admission that he had already thought, cared, sought for and chosen; he could not any longer delay confessing this to himself. After often-repeated and unavailing anguish at Mariana's loss, he felt only too clearly that he must seek a mother for the boy, and that he should find this in no one so certainly as in Therèse. He knew this very superior woman thoroughly. She seemed the only kind of wife and helper to whom he could entrust himself, and those belonging to him. Her noble attachment to Lothario excited no scruples in his mind. A strange fate had severed those two for ever; Therèse considered herself free, and had spoken of marriage— with indifference certainly, but yet as if it were a matter of course.

After deliberating long, he determined to tell her all he knew about himself. She should learn to know him

as he knew her, and to this end he began to review his own history; but it seemed so destitute of events, and on the whole, any confession he could make struck him as so little to his credit, that he was more than once on the point of giving up his purpose. At last he resolved to ask Jarno for the roll containing his apprenticeship, out of the old tower; the latter answered: "It is the right time," and Wilhelm received it.

To a noble-minded man, the consciousness that he is going to be enlightened about himself, is a dreadful sensation. All transitions are crises, and is not every crisis an illness? How reluctantly we look at ourselves in the glass after having been ill! We *feel* returning health, but we only *see* the effect of the departed malady. Wilhelm however had been well prepared; circumstances had spoken plainly, his friends had not exactly spared him, and therefore, though he unrolled the parchment hastily, he grew calmer the further he read. He found the circumstantial history of his life delineated in bold, sharp strokes; his eye was not distracted either by solitary events or short-sighted conceptions; general observations made in a kind spirit, acted as way-marks, without putting him to shame, and for the first time he saw his own likeness apart from himself; not, it is true, a second self, as if he were looking in a mirror, but another self, as we see it in a portrait; where, though we cannot own to every feature, we feel glad that a thinking mind has been pleased thus to conceive of us, and a talented hand thus to represent us, and that a picture of ourselves, as we were, exists and will continue to exist, when we have passed away.

Now that the circumstances had been recalled to his memory by the manuscript, Wilhelm proceeded to write down the history of his life for Thérèse, and was almost

ashamed at finding, that, to set against her great virtues, he could produce scarcely anything which showed signs of well-directed energy on his own side. The letter accompanying this document was as condensed as the narrative itself was minute and detailed: he asked for her friendship, and, if that were possible, her love; he offered her his hand, and begged for a speedy decision.

After some inward conflicts as to whether he should first consult his friends, Jarno and the Abbé, on this weighty matter, he determined rather to be silent. He was too firmly resolved, and the matter was too important to himself, to be submitted to the verdict of even the wisest and best of men; nay, he even took the precaution of carrying his letter himself to the nearest post. Possibly the thought suggested so clearly by the written roll,—that he had been watched and even guided in many circumstances of his life where he had fancied himself acting independently and secretly,—may have produced an unpleasant sensation in his mind; at all events, he was determined this time that his words to Therèse should come purely from his heart, and go as purely to hers, and his fate should depend alone on her resolve and decision. In such a serious point, therefore, his conscience did not reproach him for eluding the watchfulness of his guardians.

CHAPTER II.

THE letter had scarcely been sent off, when Lothario came back. They were all delighted to think that the important business matters which had been set on foot, would now soon be wound up, and Wilhelm awaited longingly the re-tying or unloosing of so many different

threads, and the settlement of his own future relations in life. Lothario gave them all a hearty greeting; he was perfectly restored to health, and cheerful, and had the air of a man who knows what he ought to do, and can execute his own will without hindrance.

Wilhelm could not return his warm greeting; he could not help saying to himself: "This is Therèse's friend and lover,—the man she is engaged to, and into his place you think of pushing yourself. Do you actually believe that you could ever efface or banish such an impression as that?" If the letter had not already gone, he would scarcely have dared to send it. Fortunately the die was cast; perhaps indeed Therèse had already decided, and the happy conclusion was only hidden from him by the veil of distance. It must soon be determined whether he had lost or won. He tried to calm himself by these considerations, but, in reality, his heart was beating almost feverishly. He could pay very little attention to the weighty business on which, to some extent, the fate of his entire fortune depended. In moments of passionate feeling, how insignificant everything surrounding, or even belonging to, a man seems in his own eyes!

Happily for him, however, Lothario treated the matter from a broad point of view, and Werner took it easily. The latter, in his eager desire for gain, was delighted at the prospect of the fine property which was coming into his, or rather into his friend's, possession. Lothario, on the other hand, seemed to be thinking of something quite different.

"I cannot feel pleasure in property," he said, "unless it is legitimate."

"But for Heaven's sake!" cried Werner, "isn't this property of ours legitimate enough?"

"Well, not quite," said Lothario.

"Are not we paying ready money for it?"

"True," said Lothario; "and I dare say you will call what I am going to mention nothing but a foolish scruple, but I can never consider property as quite legitimate—quite free from objection—unless it pays its due share to the state."

"What?" said Werner, "do you mean to say that you would rather this land of ours were liable to taxes, instead of being unencumbered as we have bought it?"

"Yes," said Lothario, "to a certain extent; for the security of a property arises only from its being placed on an equal footing with the property of others. In these modern times, when so many of the old ideas are beginning to totter, what is the peasant's chief ground for looking at a nobleman's property as less secure than his own? Why, just this—that the latter, being exempt from burdens, falls a burden on himself."

"But what will become of the interest from our capital?"

"That would be in no worse case than before," said Lothario, "if the state, in return for a just and regularly paid sum of money, would release us from that feudal humbug of entail, and would let us do what we liked with our estates, we should then not be obliged to keep such huge areas of land undivided—we could distribute them more equally among our children, so as to give each of them an opening for independent and energetic action, instead of bequeathing them, as we do, the most restricted and restricting privileges,—privileges that we cannot enjoy without being obliged to invoke the ghosts of our forefathers. How much happier our men and women would be, if they could look around them freely, and, uninfluenced by any other considerations, take a

deserving girl or some first-rate young fellow up into their own higher sphere! The state would gain more—possibly better—citizens, and would not so often be puzzled where to find heads and hands.”

“Well, I assure you,” said Werner, “that in all my life I never thought about the state; I have paid the rates, taxes and duties merely as a matter of custom.”

“Well,” said Lothario, “I still hope to make a good patriot of you. Just as no man is a good father, who does not help his children at table before himself, no man is a good citizen, who does not put by what is due to the state, before expending his money in other ways.”

Their special business was rather helped forward than hindered by these general observations. When they had nearly settled it, Lothario said to Wilhelm: “I must send you now to a place where you are more wanted than here. My sister begs you will come to her as soon as possible, for poor Mignon seems fading away, and they think that perhaps your presence might check the disease. You will see from this note, which my sister sent after me, how seriously she looks at the matter.” Lothario handed him a little note. Wilhelm, who had been listening in the greatest embarrassment, took the note; it had been hastily written in pencil, but he recognised the Countess's hand, and did not know what answer to make.

“Take Felix with you,” said Lothario; “the children will amuse one another. You will have to start early to-morrow morning. My sister's carriage, in which my servants travelled, is still here; I will give you horses for the first half of the way, and the remainder you must post. Farewell! I wish you a pleasant journey; give my best love to my sister; tell her she will soon see me

again, and, indeed, must make ready for the reception of some more guests. Our great uncle's friend, the Marquis Cipriani, is coming; he hoped to find the old man still alive, and they were looking forward to the enjoyment of a chat over old times, and their mutual fondness for art. The Marquis was much younger than my uncle, and was indebted to him for the most important part of his education and accomplishments; we must do all in our power in some measure to fill up the gap which he will feel, and this can be best done by means of a larger party."

Lothario then went to his room with the Abbé; Jarno had ridden out; Wilhelm hastened to his own room; he had no one to confide in—no one who would help him to avoid taking the step which he feared so much. The little page came in and asked him to pack up his things: the luggage, he said, must be put up on the carriage that night, in order that they might be able to start at break of day. Wilhelm did not know what to do; at last he exclaimed: "I had better get out of this house, at all events; on the way I can consider what is best to be done; and in every case I shall stop when half my journey is finished; I can then send a messenger back, and write what I have not courage to say; this done, things must take their chance." In spite of his determination, however, he passed a sleepless night; the only thing that gave him any comfort was to look at little Felix, sleeping so sweetly. "Oh!" he cried, "who knows what trials may be in store for me?—who knows how past errors may still torment me, and how often my good and reasonable plans for the future may miscarry? But oh! thou relenting, or relentless Fate, leave me the one treasure that I can call my own! If it were possible that this best part of myself could be

destroyed before I am—that this heart could ever be torn from mine, then farewell, understanding and reason—farewell all care and caution! let the very instinct of self-preservation vanish, all that separates us from the beasts disappear, and as men are not permitted to end such sad days by their own deed, may early madness deprive me of consciousness, before Death arrives to destroy it and to bring in the long night!”

He seized the boy in his arms, kissed him, pressed him to his heart and wept over him, so that the little face was wetted by his copiously-flowing tears. The child awoke; his bright eyes and loving look touched his father to the heart. “What a scene awaits me,” he exclaimed, “when I have to present you to the beautiful and unfortunate Countess, and when she presses you to the bosom which your father wounded so deeply! Surely I have reason to fear that she will push you away again with a cry, directly your touch renews her real or fancied pain!”

The coachman left him no time for thought or choice, but forced him into the carriage before daybreak. Wilhelm wrapped his little Felix up warmly; the morning was cold but bright, and the child saw the sun rise for the first time in his life. His wonder at the first fiery glance, and then the growing power of the great light, his joy, and the strange things he said about it, delighted his father, and gave him a glimpse into a heart, before which the sun rises and hangs in the heavens, as over a pure, quiet lake.

On reaching a little town, the coachman took his horses out of the carriage and rode them back. Wilhelm at once engaged a room, and now came the question: should he remain there or go on? In this irresolute state of mind he ventured once more to take out the

little note, which he had not yet trusted himself to look at again. It contained the following words: "Send your young friend to me very soon; Mignon has grown rather worse the last two days. Sad as the occasion of his coming is, I shall still be pleased to make his acquaintance."

Wilhelm had not noticed these last words at the first glance. He was terrified at reading them now, and at once decided not to go. "How is this!" he exclaimed. "Lothario knows the whole story, and yet has never told her who I am? She is not prepared calmly to meet an acquaintance whom she would rather not have seen again—she is expecting a stranger, and I appear! I can see her start back with a shudder—I see her blush! No, it is impossible, I cannot encounter such a scene." At that moment the horses were led out and harnessed; Wilhelm was resolved to unpack his things and stay where he was. He was in the greatest agitation. Hearing a maidservant coming upstairs to tell him everything was ready, he tried in haste to invent some excuse for remaining, and while doing so fixed his eyes unconsciously on the note which he held in his hand. "For Heaven's sake!" he cried, "this is not the Countess's hand, it is the writing of that beautiful Amazon!"

The servant came in, asked him to come down, and took Felix away with her. "Can this be possible?" he exclaimed. "Can it be true? What ought I to do? Stay here and wait and explain? or hasten—hasten and rush to meet the explanation? You are on the way to her, and you linger! You are to see her this evening, and you voluntarily imprison yourself! It is her handwriting—yes, it is really she! It is her hand that summons you, and her carriage that is standing ready to take you to her. At last then the riddle is answered: Lothario has

two sisters; he knows in what relation I stand to the one, but he does not know how much I owe the other. Neither does she know that the wounded vagrant who owed, if not his life, at any rate his recovery and present health to her, has been received into her brother's house with such unmerited kindness."

Felix, who was swinging himself in the carriage below, called out: "Come Father, do come! look at the beautiful clouds and the lovely colours!"

"Yes, I'm coming," cried Wilhelm, bounding down the stairs, "and all those beautiful appearances in the sky, which you are admiring so much, dear child, are as nothing compared to the sight that I am looking forward to."

When he was seated in the carriage he began to recall the circumstances connected with this story. "So this Natalie is also Therèse's friend! What a discovery, what a hope and prospect! How strange that my dread of hearing the one sister spoken of should have entirely hidden from me the existence of the other!" How joyfully he looked at his little Felix now; he was hoping for the warmest welcome both for his boy and himself.

Evening came on, the sun had set, the roads were none of the best, the postillion drove slowly and Felix had fallen asleep. Fresh doubts and fears arose in our friend's mind. "What delusions and fancies are possessing you now?" he said to himself. "A doubtful resemblance between two handwritings has made you feel perfectly sure, and led you to invent the strangest fable." He took the note out again, and in the dying light once more fancied he could recognise the Countess's hand; his eyes refused to see in each word what his heart had told him in one moment from the whole.—"Then after all,

these horses are conveying me to a dreadful scene! Who knows whether in the course of a few hours they may not be on the road back with me? Oh, if I could only see her alone at first! but perhaps her husband may be present, or the Baroness! How changed I shall find them! Shall I ever be able to stand erect before her?"

A faint hope, that perhaps after all he might be travelling to his lovely Amazon, was the only ray that could succeed in occasionally piercing these melancholy anticipations. Night had come on; the carriage rattled into a courtyard and stopped; a man-servant with a lighted torch appeared under the magnificent porch, and came down the steps to the carriage. "You have been expected a long time," he said, turning back the leather carriage apron.

Wilhelm got down, and took his sleeping little Felix in his arms; the first servant then called to another, who was standing within the door, holding a light: "Take this gentleman at once to the Baroness."

Quick as lightning the thought passed through Wilhelm's mind: "What a happiness! whether purposely or by chance, at any rate the Baroness is here, and I shall see her first. Very likely the Countess has retired for the night. Oh, ye good spirits, come to my aid, and grant that the moment of my greatest embarrassment may pass at least tolerably!"

The house, as he entered it, seemed the most gravely earnest, and, to his own feelings, sacred place he had ever trodden. A hanging lamp shed its dazzling light down on the broad and easy flight of stairs which ascended straight before him, and at a turn higher up, branched off into two. Marble statues and busts stood ranged on pedestals and in niches; some of them seemed known to him. The impressions of childhood remain ineffaced

even in their smallest details. He recognised a Muse that had belonged to his grandfather, not indeed by its form and value, but by an arm which had been restored, and a piece in her robe which had been newly let in. It was as if he were living in a fairy tale. The child felt heavy in his arms; he stopped and knelt down on the stairs, as if to get a more convenient hold of him, but really because he needed a moment's rest. He could scarcely raise himself again. The servant who was lighting the way, offered to take the child, but he could not give him up. They had now reached a large ante-room, and there, to his yet greater astonishment, he beheld the well-known picture of the sick prince. He had scarcely time to glance at it; the servant hurried him through one or two rooms into a boudoir beyond. Here sat a lady reading, thrown into shadow by a screen over the light. "Oh! that it may be she!" he said to himself in that most critical moment. The child seemed to be waking up, so he put him down, and was going up to the lady, but the little fellow sank down overcome with sleep, and the lady rose and came towards him. It was his beautiful Amazon! He lost all self-command, fell on his knees, and crying: "It is really she!" seized her hand, and kissed it in a boundless ecstasy of delight. The child lay between them on the carpet, sleeping sweetly.

He was taken up and laid upon the sofa, Natalie took her seat by him, and told Wilhelm to take the nearest chair. She offered him some refreshment, but he refused, intent only on assuring himself that it was she, and in scanning her still shaded features narrowly, and trying to recognise them with certainty. She told him in general terms about Mignon's illness: that the child was gradually being consumed by the action of a few deep feelings, that in consequence of her extreme

susceptibility, and her desire to conceal it, she often suffered from violent and dangerous spasms at the heart: that this principal organ of life would sometimes, when she was seized by any sudden emotion, stop beating so entirely, that no trace of healthy vital action could be discovered in her bosom: when however this distressing spasm was over, the power of nature would assert itself again by such violent pulsations, that the poor child suffered as much from its excess as she had before from its deficiency.

Wilhelm remembered one of these convulsive scenes, and Natalie referred him to the physician, who, she said, would go further into the matter with him, and tell him more in detail why they had summoned the child's friend and benefactor at the present moment. "You will notice one remarkable change in her," continued Natalie. "She wears a girl's dress now, much as she used to dislike it."

"How did you accomplish that?" said Wilhelm.

"It may have been very desirable, but we owe the change to chance. You shall hear how it happened. Perhaps you know that I always have a number of young girls about me, whose minds I try to train in what is good and right, while they are growing up in my house. From me they hear nothing but what I myself believe to be true, but at the same time I cannot, and do not, wish to prevent their learning from others many of the errors and prejudices which pass current in the world. If they ask me, I try as far as possible to connect these strange and unsuitable ideas with some correct notion, and so to render them, if not useful, at least harmless. For some time past, my girls have heard a good deal, from the peasants in the neighbourhood, about angels, *Knecht Ruprecht*, or the holy Christ-child appearing at certain

times, to bring gifts for the good children and punish the naughty ones. They suspected that these must be persons in disguise; I confirmed them in their idea, and without entering into many explanations, determined to give them a sight of this kind at the first opportunity. The birthday of a pair of twin-sisters who had always behaved very well, chanced to be near: I promised that this time an angel should bring them the little presents which they had so well deserved. The idea of this apparition filled the children with the most eager anticipations. I had fixed on Mignon for the angel's part, and on the appointed day had her suitably dressed in a long white dress, thin and light; neither the golden girdle round her waist, nor the golden diadem in her hair were forgotten. At first I thought of omitting the wings, but the women who arranged her dress insisted on giving her a pair of large golden pinions, in which they specially desired to display their skill. Thus apparelled, with a lily in one hand and a little basket in the other, this marvellous vision walked in among the assembled children, and even I was taken by surprise. 'There comes the angel!' I said. The children all stepped back; at last they called out: 'It is Mignon!' but yet they did not trust themselves to approach the wonderful apparition.

"'Here are your presents,' she said, holding out the basket. They gathered round her, gazed at her, touched her, and asked her questions.

"'Are you an angel?' said one child.

"'I wish I were,' answered Mignon.

"'Why are you holding a lily?'

"'My heart ought to be as pure and open; then I should be happy.'

"'What are your wings?—let us see them.'

“They represent more beautiful ones, which are not yet unfolded.”

“And in this significant way she went on answering all their innocent and careless questions. When the curiosity of the little party was satisfied, and the impression produced by the apparition began to lose its force, we thought of undressing our little angel. She would not allow it, but took her cithern, and seating herself here, on this high writing-table, sang a song with the most inexpressible grace and sweetness.

“ ‘Such let me seem, till such I be :
Take not the angel robe away !
I haste from earth, so fair to see,
Down to the narrow house of clay.

“ ‘There for a silent hour I rest,
Till sight and sense renewed I find ;
And doff the veil and candid vest,
And leave the golden crown behind.

“ ‘In those angelic forms around
Are he and she all undescried ;
Nor robes conceal, nor girdles bound,
The body—sexless, glorified !

“ ‘Free have I lived from sordid care,
Yet have I known still sharper pain—
The weight of age too soon to bear ;
Make me for aye a child again !’ *

“I determined at once,” continued Natalie, “to leave her the dress, and to have some more of the same kind made for her; these she always wears now, and it seems to me that they give her appearance quite another expression.”

As it was already late, Natalie dismissed her new guest, but he could not leave her without a certain amount of anxiety. “Is she married or not?” he said

* Translated by Mr. John Hullah, and inserted by his kind permission.

to himself. At every sound he had fancied a door would open and admit her husband. The servant who showed him to his room went away before Wilhelm had summoned courage to ask any question on this head; and his anxiety kept him awake for some time, during which he occupied himself in comparing the image of the fair horsewoman with the image of his present new friend. The two would not yet flow into one: he had, as it were, created the former, while the latter almost seemed as if it would re-create him.

CHAPTER III.

THE next morning, while every thing was still and undisturbed, he took a look over the house. It was the purest, most beautiful and most dignified style of architecture that he had yet seen. "True art," he exclaimed, "is like good society; it forces us in the pleasantest way to perceive the measure by which, and up to which, our own minds have been cultivated." The impression made on him by his grandfather's statues and busts was inexpressibly agreeable. He hastened longingly to look at the picture of the sick prince again, and thought it as charming and pathetic as ever. The man-servant opened several other rooms for him; he found a library, a natural-history collection, and a cabinet devoted to physical science. He felt himself a great stranger to all these subjects. Meanwhile Felix had awoke and run after him. Wilhelm began to be anxious about Therèse's letter: how and when might it reach him? He was afraid of seeing Mignon—almost of seeing Natalie. His present condition differed widely from those moments when he

was sealing his letter to Thérèse, and surrendering himself entirely to that noble creature.

Natalie sent to invite him to breakfast, and he entered a room in which several cleanly-dressed little girls, all of them apparently under ten years of age, were arranging a table, while an elderly person was bringing in different kinds of beverages.

Wilhelm looked attentively at a picture hanging over the sofa, which, little as it satisfied him, he could not help recognising as Natalie's portrait. She came in, and the resemblance seemed to vanish totally. To his comfort, however, both picture and reality wore the same cross—the badge of an order—on their breast.

"I have been looking at this portrait," he said to her, "and wondering how a painter can be so true and so false at the same time. The picture has a strong general resemblance to you, and yet neither the features nor the character of the face are yours."

"The matter for wonder," said Natalie, "is rather that there is so much likeness, for it is not my picture at all; it is the portrait of an aunt, who resembled me when she was old, and I only a child. It represents her when she was about my present age, and at first sight every one takes it for me. You ought to have known that excellent woman. I owe her so much. A weak state of health, a habit of being,—perhaps too constantly,—occupied with her own mental condition, and many moral and religious scruples, prevented her from being to the world what she under other circumstances might have been. She was a light that lightened only a few friends, and me especially."

"Could it be possible," said Wilhelm, who, struck by the variety of coincidences, had been thinking a moment, "could it be possible, that that beautiful, glorious soul,

whose quiet confessions have been shown to me too, was your aunt?"

"You have read that manuscript?" said Natalie.

"Yes," said Wilhelm, "with the deepest interest; and it has not been without its influence on my life. What struck me most forcibly in that account was—if I may so express it—the purity, not only of the writer's own being and life, but of all that surrounded her—the self-reliance of her nature, and its incapability of harbouring anything not in harmony with her noble, loving tone of mind."

"Then," said Natalie, "you have judged her beautiful character more leniently—I might say with truth, more justly—than many others to whom the manuscript has been shown. Every educated person knows how often he has to fight against a certain barbarism in himself—how much his self-culture has cost him, and how many are the cases in which he still thinks only of himself, and forgets what is due to others. How often every good man has to reproach himself for not having acted with sufficient delicacy! and yet when a beautiful character cultivates itself too scrupulously and conscientiously—nay, if you will, over-cultivates itself—for such a character there seems to be no toleration—no indulgence, in the world. But nevertheless people of this kind are, outside of us, what ideals are within: models, not to be imitated, but to be striven after. People laugh at the cleanliness of Dutch women; but do you think our friend Therèse would be what she is, if a similar idea were not always hovering before her with regard to her domestic arrangements?"

"Then is Therèse's friend really before me?" exclaimed Wilhelm, "is she really that Natalie to whom her inimitable aunt clung so tenderly?—who from a child

was so sympathising, loving and helpful? Such a disposition could only proceed from such a race. A glorious prospect indeed has opened before me, now that I can see your grand-parents, and the entire circle to whom you belong, at one glance!"

"Yes," replied Natalie; "in a certain sense our aunt's memoir will have given you more correct information about us than anything else could have done, though her fondness for me has made her speak too well of the child I then was. People never talk of children as they are; it is always their own hopes which they express when speaking of them."

In the meantime Wilhelm had been quickly thinking that now he knew the history of Lothario's birth and childhood too: he saw in imagination the lovely Countess with her aunt's pearls round her neck, and remembered how near he too had been to those pearls, when her tender loving lips had bowed down to meet his own. He tried to put away these sweet recollections by other thoughts; he ran through the acquaintances which that memoir had procured him, and suddenly exclaimed: "Then I am in the house of that excellent uncle! It is no mere house—it is a temple, and you are its worthy priestess—indeed, its Genius! As long as I live, I shall remember the impression made on my mind yesterday evening when I came in, and saw before me the old statues and pictures of my earliest childhood. I remembered the compassionating marble statues in Mignon's song; but these statues and pictures had no reason to mourn for me; they gazed on me with dignified earnestness, and linked my earliest years at once with the present moment. Here I find our old family treasures—the joy of my grandfather's life—exhibited in company with so many other noble works of art; and myself, whom nature

had made the good old man's favourite; unworthy as I am, I find myself too here—O God! in what associations—in what society!”

The little girls had left the room by degrees to attend to their different occupations. Wilhelm and Natalie were alone, and she made him explain his last words. The discovery, that a very valuable part of the works of art exhibited there had belonged to Wilhelm's grandfather, gave a very cheerful and sociable tone to their conversation. He had become acquainted with that house by means of the manuscript, and now it was as if he had returned to his inheritance. He wished to see Mignon; but his friend begged him to wait till the physician, who had been called away into the neighbourhood, had come back. We can easily imagine that it was the same active little man, whose acquaintance we have already made, and who was mentioned in the *Confessions of a beautiful soul*.

“As I seem now,” said Wilhelm, “to be in the midst of that family circle, I suppose the Abbé, spoken of in the manuscript, must be that eccentric, unaccountable man that, after a series of the strangest adventures, I found again at your brother's house? Perhaps you can give me some nearer information about him?”

“Oh, there is plenty that might be told about him,” answered Natalie, “but what I am most thoroughly acquainted with is the influence he exercised on our education. He was, at least for some time, convinced that education must be guided by the inclinations of the person educated; whether he is still of the same mind I cannot say. He maintained, that in human beings the first and last—the cardinal point—was action, and that no one could act unless he had the requisite gift and the impelling instinct. ‘Every one admits,’ he used

to say, 'that poets must be born so; indeed, we say the same of all the arts, because we cannot help it, and because these doings of our human nature can hardly be aped so as to deceive any one; but if you look at the matter carefully you will see that every capability—even the most inferior—is inborn, and that there is no such thing as an indeterminate capability. It is our equivocal, desultory, kind of education that makes people undecided; it excites their wishes instead of animating their natural impulses, and instead of assisting a person's real gifts, it directs his efforts towards objects which do not harmonize with the nature that is striving after them. A child or a young man, who is going astray on his own path, is worth more to me than the many who are walking correctly in paths which are not their own. If the former, either by themselves or through the guidance of others, ever find the right path—by which I mean the path suited to their own nature—they will never leave it; but the latter will be in perpetual danger of throwing off the foreign yoke, and abandoning themselves to an uncontrolled liberty.'

"It is strange," said Wilhelm, "that this remarkable man should have taken an interest in me too; for it seems that in his own way, if he did not exactly guide me, he certainly strengthened me in my errors for a time. I suppose I must wait patiently to see how he will justify himself, at some future day, for having seemingly joined with others in making sport of me."

"I have no reason," said Natalie, "to complain of this crotchet of his—if, indeed, it be a crotchet: of the whole family I came off best. I do not see either that my brother Lothario could have been better trained; but perhaps my good sister, the Countess, ought to have been differently treated; perhaps it might have been

possible to introduce more strength and earnestness into her disposition. How my brother Friedrich will turn out, I have no idea; I am afraid he will be sacrificed to a pedagogue's experiment."

"What! you have another brother?" exclaimed Wilhelm.

"Yes," replied Natalie, "a very merry, thoughtless fellow too he is, and as he has never been hindered from roaming about the world, I really do not know what is to become of such a wild fellow. I have not seen him for a long time, and my only comfort in the matter is, that the Abbé, and, indeed the whole of my brother's party, always know where he is and what he is doing."

Wilhelm was just going to ask Natalie what she thought about their paradoxical opinions and doings, and to beg for some information about that most mysterious party, when the doctor came in, and after the first greeting went at once to the consideration of Mignon's condition.

On hearing this, Natalie took Felix by the hand, saying they would go to Mignon, and prepare her for the sight of her friend.

As soon as the doctor was alone with Wilhelm, he continued: "I have strange things to tell you, such as you will be almost surprised to hear. Natalie has left us alone, in order that we may speak more freely of things which (though I have only been able to hear them from herself) cannot be openly discussed in her presence. The extraordinary disposition of the good gentle child we are talking about, consists almost entirely of a deep yearning; her longing to see her native land again, and to see you, my friend, are, I might almost say, the only earthly elements in her; and both these longings only

lay hold of objects in an infinite distance—objects, both of which seem, to this singularly constituted mind, unattainable. She very likely comes from the neighbourhood of Milan, and was stolen from her parents when quite a little child by a company of rope-dancers. From her own lips we can learn nothing further: partly, because she was too young to remember names and places exactly, but more especially, because she has taken a vow never to give a more exact description of her home or parents to any one. For the very people who found her when she had lost her way, and to whom she so carefully described her home—begging and entreating them to take her there,—only took her all the more quickly away from it, and then at night in the inn, when they fancied she was asleep, they joked and laughed about the prize they had taken, and vowed she should never find her way back again. On hearing this, the poor little creature fell into the most horrible despair, and remained in that state, until at last the holy Virgin appeared and promised to protect her. The child then swore a solemn oath to herself that, from that time forward, she would never trust any one again, nor tell her history to any human creature, but live and die trusting in direct help from Heaven. She did not tell Natalie in so many words even what I am telling you now, but our kind and clever friend gathered it from solitary expressions, songs, and such childish, thoughtless utterances as reveal the very things they are meant to hide.”

Wilhelm could explain to himself now the meaning of many of the good child's songs and sayings, and he begged his friend most urgently, on no account to keep back any other strange confessions or songs that might have come to his knowledge.

“Well,” said the physician, “in that case you must

prepare to hear a most remarkable confession, and a story in which, though unconsciously, you have a large share; and which, I fear, has been decisive for the life or death of this good little creature."

"Let me hear it," said Wilhelm, "I feel most impatient to know what you mean."

"Do you remember a woman visiting you secretly the night after the performance of Hamlet?" said the doctor.

"Yes, I remember it very well," exclaimed Wilhelm, ashamed; "but I did not expect to be reminded of it at this moment."

"Do you know who it was?"

"No, you terrify me! For Heaven's sake, it could not have been Mignon? who was it? Tell me, I beseech you!"

"I do not know myself."

"Then it was not Mignon?"

"No, certainly; but Mignon was on the point of stealing to you, and had from her hiding-place to look on with horror, and see herself anticipated by a rival."

"A rival!" cried Wilhelm. "You are perfectly bewildering me."

"You may be thankful," said the doctor, "that you can arrive at the results of the whole so quickly through my means. Natalie and I, though our interest in the matter is further removed than your own, tormented ourselves sadly before we could gain at all a clear insight into the confused mental condition of the poor child we so wished to help. It seems that some foolish speeches uttered by Philine and the other girls, and a certain little song awakened her attention, and made her fancy it would be so delightful to spend a night with the friend she loved best; but she attached nothing further to the thought

than the idea of confiding, happy rest. Love for you, my friend, was already awake and powerful in her kind heart; she had rested from many a pain and sorrow in your arms already, and only wished to enjoy the same happiness in all its fulness. Sometimes she would make up her mind to ask you for this favour;—then a secret dread would keep her back, but at last, the jovial evening, and the frame of mind brought on by the quantity of wine she had taken, gave her courage to venture on the risk, and to slip into your room that night. The door was open, and she had run on before, in order to hide herself there, when just as she reached the top of the staircase she heard a sound: she hid herself, and saw a woman, dressed in white, slip into your room. Very soon after, you came up, and she heard the large bolt drawn.

“Mignon was in an agony; all the violent sensations of a passionate jealousy, mingled with the unrecognized longings of vague desire, fiercely attacked her half developed nature. Her heart, which just before had been beating fast with longing and expectation, began suddenly to pause in its action, and felt like a piece of lead within her bosom; she could not draw breath, and, hearing the old man’s harp in the midst of this utter helplessness, she hastened up to his garret, and spent the night at his feet in terrible convulsions.”

The physician paused for a moment, but as Wilhelm continued silent, he went on: “Natalie assured me that nothing in her life ever terrified or distressed her so much as the child’s condition while telling this story; indeed, our noble friend reproached herself for having, by her questions and remarks, drawn this confession from the poor child, and cruelly renewed her acute pain by these recollections.

"The good little creature,' Natalie said, when telling me the story, 'had hardly reached this point in her tale, or rather in her answers to my successive questions, when she fell down at my feet, and, pressing her hand to her heart, cried that the pain of that dreadful night had come back again. She writhed on the ground like a worm, and I was forced to summon all my self-control, in order to remember and use any remedies that I was acquainted with for such a condition of body and mind.'"

"You are placing me in a most distressing position," exclaimed Wilhelm, "by making me feel so acutely the many ways in which I have wronged this poor child, at the very moment when I am to see her again. If I am to see her, why take away my courage to meet her freely? And, indeed, to be candid with you, if her mind is in this state, I do not see what good my presence can do? If you, as a physician, feel convinced that this twofold longing has so far undermined her constitution, that there is fear of her death, why should I bring back her pain by my presence, and perhaps even hasten her end?"

"My friend," replied the physician, "we ought to try and relieve even where we cannot cure, and that the presence of a loved object can divest the imagination of its destructive power, and change unsatisfied longing into calm contemplation, I could prove to you by most weighty instances. Only there must be moderation and purpose in everything; for such a meeting might just as easily rekindle a passionate affection that was dying away. Go to the good little thing, and be kind to her; we shall see what comes of it."

At that moment Natalie returned, and asked Wilhelm to come to Mignon with her. "She seems quite happy

with Felix, and I hope will receive her friend well." Wilhelm followed, but not without a certain reluctance. He was deeply affected by what he had just heard, and was afraid of some passionate scene. On his entrance however the very reverse occurred.

Mignon, in a girl's long white dress, with her rich, brown hair, partly in curls and partly bound round her head, was sitting with Felix on her lap, and pressing him to her heart. She looked quite like a departed spirit: the boy was the very personification of life; it was as if Heaven and Earth were embracing one another. She put out her hand to Wilhelm with a smile, saying: "I thank you for bringing me the child again; they had taken him away, God alone knows how, and since then I have not been able to live. As long as my heart still needs anything in this world, he shall fill the vacant place."

The quiet way in which Mignon had received her friend set the whole party at ease. The doctor told Wilhelm to see her often, and desired them to keep both her body and mind equally balanced. He then went away, promising to return soon.

Wilhelm could now watch Natalie in her own circle; no one could wish for anything pleasanter than to live near her. Her presence exercised the purest influence on the young girls and women who lived in her house, or came out of the neighbourhood to visit her.

"The course of your life," he said to her one day, "has probably been very even; for the description which your aunt gives of you when a child seems, if I mistake not, to suit you still. One feels that you have never lost your way. You were never obliged to retrace a single step."

"For that I have to thank my uncle and the Abbé, who understood so well how to judge my individual

peculiarities," replied Natalie. "As a child, and ever since, I can scarcely remember any stronger impression than this: that I saw everywhere what other people wanted, and felt an unconquerable desire to balance and adjust their wants. The child who could not stand alone, and the old man whose feet could not support him any longer;—a rich family longing for children, and a poor one unable to support those they had;—every quiet wish for useful and profitable work;—every germ of rising talent, and all the natural gifts for hundreds of little needful faculties;—these my eye seemed naturally destined to discover. I saw things to which no one had called my attention; but then I seemed born only to see these things. The charms of inanimate nature, which affect some people extremely, had no effect on me, and the charms of art had, I might almost say, still less power; but to plan a remedy for any distress—an equivalent for any deficiency which presented itself before me in the world—always has been, and still is, my most delightful sensation.

"If I saw a poor man in rags, the superfluous clothes hanging in the wardrobes of my own family came into my head directly; if I saw children wasting away for want of care and attention, I thought at once of some rich woman or other who seemed to be suffering *ennui* in the midst of luxury; if I saw a number of people crowded together in a small space, it struck me that they ought to be lodged in the large rooms of many a house and palace. This way of looking at things was quite natural to me, and unaccompanied by the slightest reflection, so that, when I was a child, I did the oddest things, and more than once set people in perplexity by making the most singular proposals to them. Another of my peculiarities consisted in my inability (until much

later in life, and then with difficulty) to look on money as a means of supplying these wants; all my almsdeeds were done in kind, and I know that I was often enough laughed at for this. No one but the Abbé seemed to understand me; he helped me in every way, taught me to know myself and my own wishes and inclinations, and to satisfy them in a manner most to the purpose."

"Then," said Wilhelm, "have you adopted the principles of those eccentric men in the education of your little society of girls also? Do you allow every disposition to train itself, to seek, and wander astray, to take false steps and either find themselves fortunately at the goal or lose their way miserably in error?"

"Oh no!" said Natalie; "that way of acting towards people would be quite contrary to my own opinions. It seems to me that he who does not help at the moment never helps at all—he who does not give advice at the right moment gives none. It appears to me, too, quite as needful to utter, and impress on the minds of the children, definite laws, which can give some steadfastness to their lives. Indeed, I would almost maintain that it is better to err by following rules, than to err because driven hither and thither by the arbitrary impulses of our own dispositions; as I see human beings, there seems always to be a gap in their nature, which can only be filled up by a distinctly expressed law."

"Then your course of action differs totally from that pursued by our friends?" said Wilhelm.

"Yes," replied Natalie, "and from this you may judge the marvellous tolerance of these men. Just because it is *my* way, they never disturb me in it, but meet my wishes in every possible way."

We will reserve a more detailed account of Natalie's

mode of proceeding with her children, for some other opportunity.

Mignon often asked to be of their party, and they indulged her in this wish all the more readily, because she seemed by degrees to be accustoming herself to Wilhelm again, opening her heart to him, and becoming more cheerful and happy in her life. She was glad to lean upon his arm in their walks, as she soon tired. "Mignon does not climb and jump now," she would say, "but she still longs to walk over the hill-tops, and spring from one house or one tree to the next. How much the birds are to be envied, especially when they are building their nests so prettily and cosily!"

It soon became a custom for Mignon to invite her friend to come with her into the garden. If he was busy, or she could not find him, Felix had to take his place, and though at times the dear child seemed quite loosened from this earth, at others she would hold fast, as it were, by father and son, and appear to fear being parted from them more than anything else.

At this Natalie grew thoughtful. "We wished by your presence," she said, "to open this poor, kind, little heart again; but I do not know whether we have done wisely." She was silent and seemed to expect some answer from Wilhelm. It struck him too that, in the present state of things, Mignon would be hurt in the extreme by his engagement to Therèse; but in his uncertainty he did not dare to mention his purpose, and did not suspect that Natalie had been informed of it.

Neither could he join freely in the conversation when his noble friend was speaking of her sister, praising her good qualities and pitying her condition. He was not a little embarrassed when Natalie told him that he would soon see the Countess there. "Her husband's one idea

now," she said, "is to supply the place of the deceased Count Zinzendorf in the community, and by means of discernment and activity to support and extend that great institution. He is coming here with her to take a kind of farewell, and will then visit the different Moravian settlements; people seem to treat him according to his wishes, and I almost believe, that in order to resemble his predecessor entirely, he will venture on a journey to America with my poor sister; indeed, as he is already nearly convinced that little is wanting to make him a saint, I should not at all wonder if the wish to shine at last, if possible, as a martyr, does not present itself occasionally before his soul."

CHAPTER IV.

THEY had often talked about Fräulein Thérèse, or mentioned her name casually, and nearly every time Wilhelm had been on the point of confessing to his new friend that he had made this excellent woman an offer of his hand and heart. A certain feeling, which he could not explain to himself, kept him back, and he hesitated so long that at last Natalie herself, with her heavenly, modest, bright smile said to him: "So after all I must be the one to break silence at last, and must force myself into your confidence. Why do you keep this matter a secret, my friend, when it is so important to you, and touches me so nearly? You have made an offer of your hand to my friend; I am not interfering in matters with which I have no concern; here are my credentials—here is the letter which she has written to you and sends by me!"

"A letter from Thérèse!" exclaimed Wilhelm.

"Yes, Sir! and your fate is decided; you are happy. Let me congratulate you and my friend."

Wilhelm gazed straight before him, without speaking. Natalie saw that he grew pale. "Your joy is strong," she said; "it takes the form of terror, and robs you of speech. But my sympathy is not the less heartfelt because it allows me to express myself in words. I hope you will be grateful to me, for I may tell you that I had no small influence on Therèse's decision; she asked my advice:—strange to say, you were here, and so I could fortunately conquer the few doubts still indulged by my friend. Messengers passed swiftly backwards and forwards between us; here is the result! here is her decision! Now you shall read all her letters—you shall have a clear free glance into the fair heart of your betrothed."

Wilhelm opened the unsealed letter which she handed him: it contained the following kind and pleasant words:

"I am yours, just as I am, and as you know me. I call you mine, just as you are and as I know you. Whatever marriage may change in ourselves or in our mutual relations, common sense, cheerful courage and determination will teach us to bear and accommodate ourselves to. As our attachment is not the result of passion, but of affection and confidence, we are risking less than thousands of others. You will surely forgive me, if I sometimes think warmly of my old friend; and, on the other hand, I will take your son to my heart as if I were his mother. If you like to share my little house with me at once, you shall be its lord and master, and meanwhile the purchase of the estate will be concluded. I hope no fresh arrangements will be made there without me—I should like to show at once that I deserve the confidence you have placed in me. Farewell, my dear, dear friend,

my beloved bridegroom, my honoured husband! Therèse embraces you with hope and joy. My friend will tell you more—will tell you all."

This letter brought Therèse clearly back before Wilhelm's eyes, and brought him at the same time to himself. While reading it, there had been the most rapid passage and change of thought in his mind. With terror he discovered decided traces of an affection for Natalie; he blamed himself, pronounced any thought of the kind ridiculous, pictured Therèse in all her perfection, read the letter again, and grew cheerful—or at least recovered himself so far as to be able to appear cheerful. Natalie gave him the letters that had passed between them, and from these we will now quote a few passages.

After describing her betrothed in her own fashion, Therèse went on:

"This is my idea of the man who is now offering me his hand. What he thinks of himself, you will see some day from a paper in which he has described himself to me quite openly. I am convinced that I shall be happy with him."

"As to differences of rank, you know what I have always thought about that matter. Some people feel disproportion in outward circumstances terribly, and cannot get over it at all. I do not wish to convince others, but at the same time I wish to act on my own convictions. I have no desire to set an example, and yet I am not acting without example. The only incompatibilities that frighten me are inner ones: such as a vessel that is not fit to contain what it ought to contain—much show and little enjoyment—riches and avarice—noble birth and un-

civilised manners—youth and pedantry—poverty and parade—these relations would crush me, let the world coin what names for them, and set what value upon them it will.”

“My hope that we shall suit each other is founded chiefly on this:—he is like you, you dear Natalie, whom I prize and esteem so immensely. Yes, he has the same noble seeking and striving for something better, which produces the very good that we believe we only find. How often I have blamed you in my heart for treating some person, or behaving in some matter, differently from what I should have done; and yet the result generally proved that you were right. You used to say: ‘If we take people as we find them, we only make them worse; but if we treat them as though they were what they ought to be, we bring them as far on the right way as they are capable of being brought.’ I can neither see things thus, nor act so; that I know full well. To discern, to arrange, to discipline and to command—these are my sphere. I have not forgotten what Jarno said: ‘Therèse breaks her pupils in—Natalie trains them.’ Once, indeed, he went so far as to deny that I possessed the three beautiful virtues: faith, hope and charity. ‘For faith,’ he said, ‘she has discernment, for love, perseverance, and for hope, confidence.’ I am quite willing to confess that before I knew you, clearness and prudence were the highest virtues I was acquainted with; it is only your presence that has convinced, animated and subdued me, and to such a high and noble spirit I delight to give place. It is in this sense too that I honour my new friend; the history of his life is a perpetual seeking without finding; but it is no empty seeking: he is gifted

with that wonderful, good-natured spirit of seeking, which vainly fancies people can give him what can only proceed from himself. So this time, dear, my clear-sightedness has done me no harm; I know my husband better than he knows himself, and respect him all the more. I see him, but I cannot gauge him, and all my penetration will not serve to give me an idea of what he may be able to effect. When I think of him, his likeness always comes mingled with yours, and I do not know how I have deserved to belong to two such people. But I will deserve it by doing my duty, and fulfilling all that can be expected or hoped from me."

"If I remember Lothario? Vividly and daily. I cannot spare him one moment from the society which in spirit is always around me. Oh, how I pity that noble and admirable man whose youthful error has made him my relation, for being by nature related to you! Such a being as you are, would be more worthy of him than I. To you I could—indeed, I should feel obliged, to give him up. Let us be everything possible to him, until he finds a wife worthy of him, and even then, let us be together and remain so."

"But what will our friends say now?" began Natalie.

"What! your brother knows nothing of this?"

"No, as little as your own people; this time, the matter has been entirely negotiated among us women. I do not know what fancies Lydia has been putting into Therèse's head; she seems to distrust the Abbé and Jarno. Lydia has roused her suspicions with regard to certain secret plans and connexions, of which certainly I had some general idea, though I never thought of

penetrating further into them, and Therèse was determined that in this decisive step of her life she would allow no one to influence her but myself. She and my brother had already agreed only to announce their respective marriages to one another, and not to ask each other's advice on the matter."

Natalie then wrote to her brother; she invited Wilhelm to add some words to her letter—Therèse had asked her to do so. They were just going to seal it, when Jarno was unexpectedly announced. He was most warmly welcomed, and seemed to be in a very cheerful, jocular humour; at last he could restrain himself no longer, and said: "The fact is, I came to bring a very strange, but very welcome piece of news; it concerns our friend Therèse. You have sometimes blamed us, my beautiful Natalie, for meddling with so many matters; now you will see what a good thing it is to have one's spies everywhere. Guess, and let us for once see your sagacity."

The self-gratulatory tone with which he spoke these words, and the mischievous look which he threw at Wilhelm and Natalie, convinced them that their secret was discovered. Natalie answered with a smile: "Oh! we are much more ingenious than you fancy; we had answered the riddle in black and white, even before it was given us."

So saying she gave him the letter to Lothario, not a little pleased at being able in this way to parry the little surprise and embarrassment which he had intended for them. Jarno took the letter in some surprise, looked through it, seemed lost in amazement, let it fall, and stared at them both with an expression of surprise,—or rather terror,—very foreign to his face. But he said not one word.

Wilhelm and Natalie were very much struck by this

conduct. Jarno began to walk up and down the room. "What ought I to say?" he exclaimed, "or ought I to say anything? It cannot remain a secret, and we cannot avoid the confusion. Well then, secret for secret! Surprise for surprise! Therèse is not her mother's daughter! the hindrance is removed, and I came here to ask you to prepare that noble girl for her marriage with Lothario."

Jarno saw the utter astonishment of the two friends; they looked down. "This is one of those cases," he said, "which can be least easily borne in society; whatever each of us is thinking on the matter, will be best considered alone; at all events, I must beg an hour's leave of absence for myself." He went out quickly into the garden; Wilhelm followed him mechanically, but at some distance.

They met again an hour later. Wilhelm began the conversation by saying; "Formerly, while I was living an aimless and desultory—I may say, thoughtless—life, friendship, love, affection and confidence came to meet me with open arms—indeed, they forced themselves upon me; now that I am in earnest, my fate seems to have adopted quite another course. The resolution to offer Therèse my hand, was perhaps the first decision that originated entirely in my own mind. I prepared my plan with deliberation, my reason concurred entirely in it, and all my hopes were fulfilled by that noble girl's consent. Suddenly my outstretched hand is struck down by the strangest destiny. Therèse holds her own out to me in the distance, as if in a dream; I cannot take it, and the beautiful vision leaves me for ever. Farewell then, lovely vision, and ye too, ye pictures of pure happiness that have gathered round it, farewell!"

He was silent for a moment, and gazed steadfastly

before him; Jarno was going to speak, but Wilhelm interrupted him: "Let me say something more, for the lot that is being thrown this time is to decide my entire destiny. At this moment an impression comes to my help: it is the impression made on me at first sight by Lothario, and which has staid with me ever since. That man deserves every kind of affection and friendship; friendship without self-sacrifice is not to be thought of. I found it easy to deceive an unhappy girl for his sake; for his sake it shall be possible for me to give up the worthiest bride. Go and tell him this strange story, and tell him at the same time what I am ready to do."

Jarno answered: "In cases such as this I hold that deliberation is everything. Do not let us take a single step without Lothario's consent. I will go to him, and meanwhile do you wait calmly for my return or his letters."

He rode away, leaving the two friends extremely sad. They had time to repeat what had happened in different ways, and make their comments upon it. It struck them now for the first time, that they had accepted this strange announcement from Jarno, without enquiring at all into particulars. Wilhelm, indeed, began to indulge doubts; but their astonishment and perplexity rose to the highest point on the next day, when a messenger arrived from Therèse, bringing the following strange letter to Natalie:

"Singular as it may seem, I must dispatch a second letter directly after my first, and beg you to send my betrothed to me with all speed. He shall be my husband, whatever plans people may make to rob me of him. Give him the enclosed letter; only not before witnesses, whoever it may be that may happen to be present."

The letter to Wilhelm ran as follows:

"What will you think of your Therèse, when she all at once, and even passionately, urges on a marriage, which seemed originally to have been planned by the calmest judgment. Let nothing prevent you from starting directly you get this letter. Come, dear, dear friend, trebly dear to me, now that they want,—if not to rob me of you,—at least to put difficulties in the way of my possessing you."

"What is to be done?" cried Wilhelm, on reading this letter.

"Neither my heart nor my understanding," said Natalie, after a little reflection, "have ever been so silent in any case as in this; I should not know what to do any more than I know what to advise."

"Can it be possible," exclaimed Wilhelm vehemently, "that after all Lothario knows nothing of the whole affair, or if he knows, is, like us, the object of their hidden plans? Perhaps when Jarno had read our letter he invented that fable on the spot. He might have told us something quite different if we had not been too hasty. What can they possibly want? What can be their intentions? What can Therèse mean by a plan? Yes—it cannot be denied—Lothario is surrounded by secret agencies and combinations; I have had experience myself of their activity; I know that in a certain sense they concern themselves about the actions and the destinies of different people, and manage to guide them. Of the designs to be served by these secrets, I understand nothing, but I can see clearly enough through this newest plan to rob me of Therèse. On the one hand, they paint Lothario's possible happiness before my eyes, perhaps only as a blind; on the other, I see the bride I honour and respect calling me to her heart. What ought I to do? What ought I to leave undone?"

"Only have a little patience!" said Natalie; "take a little time for consideration. With regard to this strange knot, I only know thus much—we must not be over-hasty in doing what can never be undone. If it be a fable or a made-up plan, we have steadfastness and prudence to oppose to it; it must soon become evident whether the tale be true or an invention. If my brother really has any hope of being able to marry Therèse, it would be cruel to snatch away his good fortune in the very moment when it is looking kindly on him. Only let us wait to see whether he knows anything about it, and whether he has any belief or hope himself."

Fortunately a letter from Lothario arrived to confirm these reasons for her advice: "I shall not send Jarno back," he wrote; "one line from my own hand will be worth more to you than a messenger's most explicit words. I am certain that Therèse is not the daughter of her mother, and I cannot give up the hope of possessing her until she is convinced of it herself; she can then decide calmly and deliberately between me and our friend. I entreat you not to let him leave your side. Your brother's happiness—his very life—depends on this. I promise you, this suspense shall not last long."

"You see how the matter stands," said Natalie, looking kindly at Wilhelm; "give me your word of honour not to leave the house."

"Here you have it!" he exclaimed, giving her his hand. "I will not leave this house against your will. I thank God and my good genius that I have been guided this time—and by you."

Natalie wrote an account of all that had happened to Therèse, enclosed Lothario's letter, and declared that she should not allow Wilhelm to leave her house.

Therèse answered: "I am not a little surprised that

Lothario is convinced too, but surely towards his own sister he would not dissemble so far. I am annoyed—very much annoyed. I had better say nothing further. The best thing of all would be for me to come to you, but I must first settle poor Lydia; they are treating her cruelly. I am afraid we are all being deceived, and so deceived that we shall never have our eyes opened again. If our friend were of my mind, he would escape nevertheless, and throw himself on his Therèse's heart; no one should tear her from him; but I fear now that I shall lose him, and not regain Lothario. From him again they are tearing Lydia, by showing him a distant hope of possessing me. But I will not say anything more; it only makes the confusion greater. Time will show whether, as this goes on, the most delightful relations will not become so distracted, undermined and disturbed, that even when all is clear again they will be past help. If my friend does not make his escape in a few days, I shall come to you, to seek for him and hold him fast. You will wonder how it is that such a passionate feeling has gained the mastery over your friend Therèse. It is not passion—it is a conviction that as Lothario could not be mine, this new friend will make the happiness of my life. Tell him this in the name of the little boy who sat with him under the oak, and rejoiced in his sympathy! Tell him in the name of Therèse, who met his offer with such heartfelt frankness! My first dream—of a life with Lothario—has departed far from my soul; the dream of life with my new friend is still present to my mind. Do people esteem me so lightly, that they think it is quite easy to me to exchange one lover for another at a moment's notice?"

"I rely upon you," said Natalie, giving Wilhelm this letter. "You will not escape. Remember" that the

happiness of my life is in your hands. My existence is so bound up and rooted in that of my brother, that he can never suffer pain without my feeling the same, nor feel a joy which does not make me happy too. Yes, I can truly say, that only through him I have learnt that the heart can be moved and raised, and that in this world there can be such joy, love and feeling as more than satisfies our every need."

She stopped; Wilhelm took her hand and exclaimed: "Oh, go on! this is the right time for true mutual confidence; we have never needed to know each other more than now."

"Yes, my friend," she said smiling, with her own quiet, gentle, indescribable dignity, "it would not perhaps be ill-timed, if I were to tell you now that what is talked of in so many books as love,—what the world calls love, and shows as such,—has, all of it and always, appeared to me to be nothing but a fable."

"You have never loved?" cried Wilhelm.

"Never or always," answered Natalie.

CHAPTER V.

DURING this conversation they had been walking up and down the garden. Natalie had plucked some very remarkable-looking flowers, which were totally unknown to Wilhelm, and he asked their names.

"I dare say you have no idea for whom I am picking this nosegay," said Natalie. "It is meant for my uncle, and we are going to pay him a visit. The sun is just shining so brightly on the Hall of the Past; I must take you in at once, and I never go there without taking some of my uncle's favourite flowers. He was a

singular man, and subject to the most peculiar impressions. For certain plants and animals—for certain people and places—indeed, even for certain kinds of minerals, he had a decided preference, which could seldom be explained. He often used to say: 'If I had not from a child resisted my own inclinations so much—if I had not striven to widen my understanding and make it more universal, I should have been the narrowest and most intolerable man; for nothing is more intolerable than exclusive eccentricity, where you have a right to expect pure and thorough action.' And yet he was obliged to confess that he should feel as if life and breath were failing him, if he did not from time to time indulge these feelings, and allow himself to enjoy with all his heart what he could not always commend or excuse. 'It is not my fault,' he would say, 'if I have not been able entirely to reconcile my impulses and my reason.' And then, generally, he would joke about me, and say: 'Really, Natalie may be looked on as very fortunate, for her nature demands nothing of her but what the world wishes for and needs.'"

While talking thus, they had reached the main building again. She took him along a wide passage, to a door before which lay two granite sphinxes. This door was in the Egyptian style, a little narrower above than below, and its folding leaves of brass prepared you for some solemn—even awful—sight within. When therefore they opened, and admitted the person entering, into a hall in which art and life had completely abolished every recollection of death, the change from solemn expectation to unmingled cheerfulness was most agreeable. Well-proportioned arched recesses had been made in the walls, and in these stood large sarcophaguses; in the piers between them were smaller openings, ornamented with urns

and vases; the remaining surface of the walls and of the vaulted roof was regularly divided, and on it, amidst cheerful and varied borders, wreaths and decorations, were painted bright and significant figures in compartments of different sizes. The architectural portions of the building were encrusted with that beautiful yellow marble, which has in it a tinge of red; and stripes of a light blue chemical composition, made most successfully to imitate lapis lazuli, gave unity and coherence to the whole, at the same time satisfying the eye by a kind of contrast. All this pomp and ornament presented itself in pure architectural proportions, and thus every one who came in seemed raised above himself, by learning for the first time, from this combination of art, what man is, and can be.

Opposite to the door, on a splendid sarcophagus, was the marble figure of a noble-looking man, reclining on a cushion. He held a roll, on which he seemed to be gazing with quiet attention. This roll was so placed that the words it contained could be read with ease. They were: *Remember to live.*

Nataliè took away a withered nosegay, and laid a fresh one before her uncle's statue; for he it was who was represented by this figure, and Wilhelm thought he could still remember the features of the old gentleman he had seen on that unfortunate day in the wood. "We used to spend many an hour here," said Natalie, "while the hall was being finished. In his last years, he collected around him a number of clever artists, and his greatest pleasure was to help in devising and deciding on the drawings and cartoons to these paintings."

Wilhelm could not find words to express all his delight at the objects that surrounded him. "What life there is in this Hall of the Past!" he exclaimed.

"It might quite as well be called the Hall of the Future or the Present. Such was everything, and such it will be! Nothing is transitory, but he who is looking on and enjoying. This picture of a mother, pressing her child to her heart; why, it will outlive whole generations of happy mothers. Perhaps, centuries to come, some father will delight in looking at this bearded man, laying aside his gravity to play with his little son. And through all time the bride will sit and look so bashful, and, whatever her inward wishes may be, will want to be comforted and reassured; and the bridegroom will listen as impatiently upon the threshold to know whether he may enter."

Wilhelm's eyes wandered over countless pictures. From the first happy instinct of childhood to use and exercise all its limbs, though only in play, up to the calm reserved gravity of the philosopher: in a beautiful and living sequence, it was set forth how man possesses no inborn inclination or capability that he does not need and use. From the first tender awakening of self-consciousness, when the girl pauses in raising her pitcher, to look with pleasure at her own likeness in the clear water up to those high solemnities, when kings and peoples at their altars call upon the gods to witness their treaties—everything was pictured there, full of meaning and force.

It was a world—a heaven—that surrounded the spectator in this place; and besides the thoughts suggested, and feelings excited, by these cultivated forms, something else seemed to be present—something which took possession of a man's entire self. Wilhelm felt this, though he could not account for it. "What is this," he exclaimed, "that independently of all the significance and import of these figures, and divested of all the sympathy

with which human events and destinies inspire us, affects me so powerfully, and at the same time so sweetly! It speaks to me from the whole, though I do not fully understand that whole, and from each separate part, though I cannot fully make each part my own. What a magic charm seems to lie for me in these surfaces, these lines, these heights and breadths, these masses and colours! What is it that makes these figures, even when superficially looked at, and regarded merely as ornament, so delightful? Yes! I feel that we might linger on in this place, rest in it, take everything in with the outward eye, be quite happy, and at the same time think of and feel something quite different from what is standing before our eyes."

And certainly, if we were able to describe the happy way in which everything was arranged, and, either by connexion or contrast, by unity or variety of colour, so adapted to its place that it looked exactly as it ought to have looked, and not one whit otherwise, and produced an effect as perfect as it was definite, we should have transported the reader to a place which he would not soon wish to quit.

Four large marble candelabras stood in the four corners of the hall, and in the middle four smaller ones, round a beautifully wrought sarcophagus, which, to judge from its size, could have contained a young person of middle stature.

Natalie stopped by this monument, and laying her hand on it, said: "My good uncle had a great fancy for this work of antique art. He sometimes said: 'It is not only the early blossoms that fall—such as you can preserve in those little spaces above; there are fruits which, while hanging on the bough, have long given us the fairest hopes, and yet a secret worm has been at the

same time the cause of their premature ripeness and their destruction.' I am afraid," she went on, "that what he said was prophetic of that dear girl, who seems gradually to be withdrawing from our care, and tending towards this quiet dwelling."

They were just going away, when Natalie said: "I must draw your attention to one thing more: do you see those semi-circular openings on each side, up above? The choir can stand concealed there, and those brass ornaments under the cornice serve to fasten the curtains, which by my uncle's orders are to be hung up at every funeral. He could not live without music, and more especially vocal music; but he had this peculiarity—he did not like to see the singers. He used to say: 'The theatre spoils us sadly, for on the stage it is as if the music were only of service to the eye—it accompanies the movements, not the sentiments. At oratorios and concerts the figure of the singer is disturbing; true music is only meant for the ear; a beautiful voice is the most universal thing that can be imagined, and the pure effect of this universality is destroyed, when the circumscribed individual that produces it places himself before our eyes. I like to see the man with whom I am to talk, for he is a single human being, whose appearance and character either give his discourse value or make it worthless; but the man who sings to me ought to be invisible; his appearance ought not to prejudice me in his favour, or lead me astray in any sense. In the latter case it is only one organ speaking to another, not mind to mind, not a world in its thousandfold varieties to the eye, not a heaven to men.' In the same way he liked to have the orchestra concealed as much as possible at the performance of instrumental music: because the mind became distracted and confused by the merely mechanical

efforts of the players, and the strange gestures they are forced to make. For these reasons he always closed his eyes when listening to music, in order to concentrate his entire being on pure oral enjoyment alone."

They were just going to leave the hall, when they heard the children rushing along the passage, and Felix shouting out: "No, I! No, I!"

Mignon was the first to dash in at the open door, but she was out of breath, and could not utter a word, while Felix, still some way off, called out: "Mother Therèse is here!" The children, it seemed, had run a race, in order to bring the news. Mignon lay in Natalie's arms; her heart was beating violently.

"You naughty child," said Natalie, "has not all violent exertion been forbidden you? See how your heart is beating!"

"Let it break!" said Mignon, with a deep sigh; "it has beaten too long already."

They had scarcely recovered from this sudden disturbance—this kind of consternation—when Therèse came in. She darted up to Natalie, and embraced her and the poor child. Then turning to Wilhelm, she gazed at him with her clear eyes, and said: "Well, my friend, how are matters now? You have surely not let them lead you astray?" He took one step nearer to her, she sprang towards him and hung upon his neck. "Oh, my Therèse!" he exclaimed.

"My friend! my loved one! my husband! Yes, I am thine for ever!" she cried, kissing him eagerly.

Felix pulled her dress and called out: "Mother Therèse, I am here too!" Natalie stood looking straight before her; suddenly Mignon put her left hand to her heart, and stretching out her right arm violently fell down with a scream at Natalie's feet, to all appearance dead.

Their terror was great, for not the faintest movement, either of heart or pulse, could be detected. Wilhelm took her in his arms, and carried her up quickly; the body hung dangling over his shoulder. The doctor's presence gave but little comfort; he and the young surgeon, whom we know already, exerted themselves in vain. It was not possible to call the dear child back into life.

Natalie beckoned to Thérèse; the latter took her friend's hand, and led him out of the room. He was dumb, and as if bereft of speech; and had not the courage to meet her eyes. In this way he sat by her, on the very sofa on which he had first found Natalie.

He thought rapidly over a succession of events—or rather he did not think—he simply allowed what he could not get rid of to work upon his mind. There are moments in life, in which events fly backwards and forwards ceaselessly before us, like winged shuttles, and weave a tissue the material and pattern of which we ourselves have more or less spun and designed. "My friend!" said Thérèse, breaking the silence and taking his hand, "my beloved one! let us hold together firmly in this moment, as we may often probably have to do in similar cases. These are the events which cannot be borne alone. Remember, my friend, and feel, that you are not alone—show that you love your Thérèse, first of all by sharing your grief with her." She embraced him, and clasped him gently to her bosom; he took her in his arms, and pressed her eagerly to himself. "That poor child," he exclaimed, "used to seek a refuge and protection on my uncertain breast in her moments of sadness; let the steadfast certainty of yours help me in this dreadful hour." They held each other in a firm embrace; he felt her heart beat against his breast; but in his spirit all was desolate and empty;

only the images of Mignon and Natalie flitted like shadows before his imagination.

Natalie came in. "Give us your blessing!" exclaimed Therèse. "Let us be united before you in this sad moment." Wilhelm had hidden his face on Therèse's neck; it was a happy thing for him that he was able to shed tears. He neither heard nor saw Natalie come into the room, but at the sound of her voice his tears redoubled.

"What God has joined together," said Natalie smiling, "I have no wish to put asunder; but I cannot unite you, neither can I praise you for allowing pain and affection so completely to banish the remembrance of my brother from your hearts as seems to be the case." At these words Wilhelm broke from Therèse's arms.

"Where are you going?" exclaimed both the women.

"Let me see the child that I have killed!" he cried. "A misfortune that we can see with our bodily eyes is less than an evil that is engraved on our minds by imagination; let us look at the departed angel! the serene expression on her face will tell us that it is well with her!" As the two friends could not restrain this agitated youth, they followed; but the good doctor met them on their way, and, with the young surgeon, stopped them from going to see the dead girl, saying: "Remain away from this sad sight, and let me, as far as it lies in the power of my art, give some permanence to the remains of this strange child. I will at once apply the beautiful art, not only of embalming, but of preserving in a body the appearance of life, to this dear little creature. As I foresaw her death, I had made my preparations, and with the help of this assistant I have no doubt of succeeding in the present case. Only give me a few days, and do not ask to see the dear child till we have taken her into the Hall of the Past."

Again the young surgeon had that remarkable instrument-case in his hand. "From whom can he have received that?" said Wilhelm to the physician.

"I know it very well," answered Natalie; "he had it from his father who dressed your wounds in the wood."

"Then I was not mistaken," cried Wilhelm; "I knew the ribbon again directly. Oh, do give it up to me! It was the first thing that brought me on the track of my benefactress. How much joy and sorrow such a lifeless object will outlive! It has been present at so much agony, and yet its threads are not worn out! It has accompanied so many at their last moments, and yet its colours are not faded! It was present at one of the most beautiful moments in my own life—when I lay wounded on the ground, and your succouring form came in sight, just as that poor child, whose early death we are now mourning, with her hair all steeped in blood, was trying in the tenderest way to save my life."

The friends had not had much time to talk over the sad event, and enlighten Fräulein Therèse about Mignon, and the probable reason of her unexpected death, when strangers were announced; these, however, when they appeared, proved by no means strange. Lothario, Jarno and the Abbé entered the room. Natalie went forward to meet her brother; a momentary silence took place among the rest, and then Therèse, with a smile, said to Lothario: "You could scarcely have expected to find me here; at least it is not exactly advisable that we should seek one another out at such a time; nevertheless, after so long an absence, I bid you heartily welcome."

Lothario gave her his hand, and replied: "If we are to suffer and to bear privation, it had better be done in the presence of the good we love and long for. I ask

for no influence on your decision, and my confidence in your feeling, judgment and singleness of mind is still so strong, that I am quite willing to lay my own fate, and the fate of my friend, in your hands."

The conversation then turned at once to general, indeed one might say, to unimportant subjects, and the party soon broke up into pairs for a walk. Natalie joined her brother, Therèse walked with the Abbé, and Wilhelm stayed behind in the castle with Jarno.

The arrival of the three friends just when such a heavy sorrow was pressing on Wilhelm's heart, had irritated and made matters worse, instead of diverting him from his grief. He felt annoyed and suspicious, and when Jarno reproached him for his morose silence, took no pains to hide his feelings. "What need is there for anything further?" he exclaimed. "Lothario arrives with his coadjutors; and it would be strange indeed if the mysterious powers of the old tower, who are always so wonderfully busy, did not exert their influence now, and carry out, who knows what strange purposes, either on us or by our means. So far as I know these holy men, it seems to be their laudable intention at all times to sever what is united, and unite what is severed. The kind of fabric that is to result from this method of proceeding, is probably intended to remain an everlasting secret from our unhallowed eyes."

"You are annoyed and bitter," said Jarno; "that is very charming and right; if you would get thoroughly angry now, it would be better still."

"That would not be difficult to bring about either," replied Wilhelm, "and I very much fear that this time people want to try not only my natural, but my acquired patience, to its very utmost."

"Well then," said Jarno, "while we are waiting to

see how matters really mean to turn out, I should like to tell you something about the tower, as it seems to excite so much suspicion in your mind."

"You are quite at liberty to try and distract my thoughts, if you like to risk the effort," replied Wilhelm; "but my mind is just now so fully occupied, that I hardly know whether I shall be able to take a due interest in these most dignified adventures."

"I won't allow your present agreeable mood to scare me from explaining this matter properly to you," said Jarno. "You think me a clever fellow already, and you shall have reason yet to think me an honest one—besides, this time I have been commissioned."

"I would rather you spoke from your own feeling, and from a real wish to clear up my doubts," replied Wilhelm, "and as I cannot listen to you without suspicion, why should I listen at all?"

"Well," said Jarno, "if I have nothing better to do just now than to tell a parcel of stories, I should think you had time to pay a little attention to them. Perhaps you will be more inclined to do so if I begin by saying: that all you saw in the tower was in fact only relics of a youthful attempt—an attempt begun most seriously by most of the initiated, though often mentioned with a smile now by all of them."

"So all those grand signs and words were a mere mockery!" exclaimed Wilhelm. "We are taken solemnly to a place which in itself inspires us with reverence, are shown the strangest visions, and receive rolls full of beautiful and mysterious sayings, of which, to be sure, we understand very little; it is revealed to us that hitherto we have been only apprentices, our apprenticeship is declared to be at an end, and lo!—we are no wiser than before."

"Is that parchment within reach?" said Jarno; "there is a great deal that is very good in it; those general maxims are by no means taken at random, though they may very likely seem empty and dark to any one who has no experience with which to match them. But give me the so-called indentures, if you have them handy."

"Certainly, I have them quite within reach," replied Wilhelm; "such an amulet as that should always be carried in one's bosom."

"Well," said Jarno, smiling, "who knows whether its contents may not some day find a place in your head and heart?"

Jarno looked into it, and glanced over the first half. "All this," he said, "refers to the development of artistic feeling; that is a matter on which others may talk; the second part treats of life, and there I am more at home."

He then began to read passages from the roll, speaking between them, and interspersing his reading with remarks and anecdotes. "The liking of young people for mysteries, ceremonies and high-sounding phrases is extraordinary, and often denotes a certain depth of character. At that time of life we like to feel our whole nature laid hold of and touched, even if only in a dim, uncertain fashion. A youth, in the dim foreshadowing of his own mind, believes that he shall find much in a mystery, thinks he ought to lay much weight on it, and that he shall be able to effect much by its means. These were the feelings and opinions in which the Abbé strengthened a number of youths, partly on principle, partly from inclination and habit, as he seems to have been associated sometime ago with a society which probably effected much in secret. I, more than the

others, found difficulty in reconciling myself to this mode of action. I was older than they, had had clear perceptions even from a child, and wished for nothing better than clearness in everything; I only cared to know the world as it was, and so far infected the rest and best of my companions with this hobby, that we ran a near chance of turning our entire mental culture into a wrong direction; for we began to see nothing but the faults and narrow-mindedness of others, and to fancy ourselves first-rate people. Here the Abbé came to our aid: he taught us that we ought not to criticise people without interesting ourselves for their improvement, and that, in fact, working activity is the only position from which we can observe ourselves even. As he advised us not to depart from the original forms observed by the society, there remained something of law about our meetings; it was easy to trace the original mystic notions in the plan of our body, and later it assumed, as if by a figure, the form of a mechanics' guild, which rises into the regions of art. Hence came the terms, Apprentices, Assistants and Masters. We wished to see with our own eyes, and form an archive of our knowledge of the world, which should be quite our own; hence arose the many confessions, partly written by ourselves, partly by others at our persuasion, and from which afterwards the different Apprenticeships were composed. It is not every one who is really concerned about his own education; many only want a recipe for comfort—a prescription for wealth or some other kind of happiness. All those who did not really want to stand upon their feet, were either put off by mystifications and humbug of some sort, or got rid of. We only pronounced those free who deeply felt and clearly acknowledged the purpose for which they had been born, and who had

trained themselves sufficiently to go on their way with a certain amount of joy and ease."

"Then in my case you were much too precipitate," said Wilhelm, "for just from that very moment I have known less than ever what I can, wish, or ought to do."

"It is not our fault that we have fallen into such confusion, and I hope our good fortune may help us out again; meanwhile, listen: He in whom there is much to be unravelled and developed will in due time be enlightened about himself and the world. Few can think and act. Thought expands, but it paralyses; action gives life, but narrows the mind."

Here Wilhelm interrupted him: "Pray don't read any more of those strange sentences!" he cried. "They have puzzled me enough already."

"Then I will keep to my story," said Jarno, half rolling up the parchment and only peeping into it occasionally. "I was the one who made the least use of the society, and of my fellow-men; I am a very bad teacher, for I cannot bear to see people making awkward attempts, and I can't help calling out to any one, who I see has lost his way and is in danger of breaking his neck, even if he is walking in his sleep. On this point I always got into trouble with the Abbé, for he maintains that error can only be cured by erring. We have often argued about you, too; he had taken an especial fancy to you, and to attract his notice in any great degree is not a thing to be despised. You must admit that whenever I saw you I told you the plain truth."

"You certainly did not spare me," said Wilhelm; "and you seem to remain true to your principles."

"Whatever can there be to spare," replied Jarno, "when you see a young fellow of good abilities going the wrong way?"

"Excuse me," said Wilhelm; "I know very well that you have sternly denied me the slightest talent for acting; but though I confess that I have entirely given up the art, I cannot possibly, in my own mind, consider myself totally incapable of being an actor."

"And yet in mine," said Jarno, "nothing can be clearer than that a man, who is only able to act *himself*, is no actor. He who cannot transform himself, body and soul, into a number of other forms, does not deserve the name. For instance, you acted Hamlet very well, and a number of other parts, where you had the benefit of your own character and appearance, and the mood of the moment. This is all very well for an amateur theatre, or for any one who has no other course in life open to him. [We should beware," continued Jarno, looking into the roll again, "of cultivating any talent which we can never hope to practise in perfection.] Carry it to whatever point you may, still, when once you clearly perceive the true merit of a master in the art, you will painfully regret the loss of time and power spent on your own bungling."

"Do not read!" said Wilhelm, "I beseech you; go on speaking and explaining. So the Abbé helped me to Hamlet by providing a ghost?"

"Yes, for he assured us that if it were possible to cure you at all, this was the only way."

"And that was why he left the veil behind, and told me to fly?"

"Yes, he went so far as to hope that your love of acting would be sated by the representation of Hamlet, and declared that you would never go on the stage again; I believed the reverse, and was right. We disputed about it that very evening after the performance."

"Then you saw me act?"

"Certainly we did."

"And who gave the ghost?"

"That I cannot say. It was either the Abbé or his twin-brother; I am inclined to think the latter, as he is a trifle taller."

"Then you have secrets from each other too?"

"Friends can and must have secrets *from* each other; but they are no secrets *to* each other."

"I feel puzzled when I only think of all these puzzles. But give me some more explanations about the man that I owe so much to, and have so much cause to reproach."

"What makes him so valuable to us," replied Jarno, "and gives him to a certain extent dominion over us all, is the free, sharp eye, with which he is endowed by nature, for detecting all the powers that dwell in men, and that can be cultivated, each in its own way. Most people, even the best, are but shortsighted; each of them values a certain set of qualities in himself and others, shows them the preference, and wishes them cultivated. The Abbé is the very reverse of this; he understands and enjoys recognising and promoting everything. But here I must look at the parchment again: It is only all men taken together that constitute humanity—all powers together, the world. These are often at strife, and while they are trying to destroy each other, Nature keeps them together, and reproduces them. From the lowest animal instinct for any kind of handicraft, up to the highest exercise of the most intelligent art—from the lisping and crowing of a little child, up to the most exquisite utterances of an orator or singer—from a boy's first fight, up to the vast dispositions which are made for the defence and conquest of entire countries—from the merest good-nature and the most passing affection, to the most

vehement passion, and enduring earnest union—from the simplest feeling of a sensuous present, to the faintest foreshadowings and hopes of the most distant spiritual future—all this, and far more, lies in human beings and must be cultivated;—not in one man however, but in many. Every gift is important, and must be developed. If one person promotes only what is useful, and another only what is beautiful, the two together make up but one human being. Whatever is useful promotes itself, for it is produced by the multitude and is necessary to all, but the beautiful must be encouraged, for it is represented by few, and needed by many.”

“Stop!” cried Wilhelm. “I have read all that.”

“Only a few lines more,” replied Jarno; “this is the Abbé exactly: One power governs another, but none can form the other. In each gift—and there alone—lies the power to perfect itself; this is understood by so few people, and yet they wish to teach and act on others.”

“I do not understand it either,” said Wilhelm.

“But you will have to hear the Abbé preach on this text often enough; so let us always try to see clearly what *we* possess, and what can be cultivated in *us*, and hold it fast; let us be just to others, for we are only worthy of esteem ourselves in so far as we know how to value others.”

“For Heaven’s sake don’t go on with those maxims! I feel them but a poor remedy for a wounded heart. Rather tell me in your cruelly decided way, what you expect of me, and in what fashion I am to be sacrificed.”

“I assure you that some day you will beg our pardon for every one of these suspicions. It is your affair to prove and choose; ours to stand by you. No one is happy until his indeterminate efforts have decided on their own limit. Don’t pin your faith on me, hold by

the Abbé; do not think of yourself—think of what is round about you. Learn, for instance, to understand Lothario's first-rate qualities; see how sight and action with him are inseparably connected, how unceasingly he goes forward, how he expands and carries every one along with him. Wherever he is, he brings a whole world with him; his presence animates and excites others. On the other hand, look at our good friend the doctor! His nature seems to be the very opposite. While the former is acting on the general whole, and producing effects even afar off, the latter is directing his clear gaze on to the things that lie nearest; he does not so much elicit or animate action, as provide the means for it; his doings are just like a well-managed farm or household; with a noiseless efficiency he helps each one forward in his own peculiar sphere; his knowledge is a continual collection and spending, a receiving and imparting in detail. Lothario, perhaps, is capable of destroying in one day what the other had been years in building, but probably Lothario could in one moment impart to others the power of restoring a hundredfold what he had destroyed."

"It is but a melancholy occupation," said Wilhelm, "to be obliged to meditate on the unmixed superiority of other people at the very moment when you are at variance with yourself; such contemplations may be all very well for a man who is at peace, but they do not suit one who is stirred by passion and uncertainty."

"Calm and reasonable contemplation can never be injurious," replied Jarno, "and while accustoming ourselves to think of the better qualities of others, our own insensibly take their right place within us, and we gladly give up every false course of action to which imagination may have been tempting us. Try to rid your mind,

if possible, of every suspicion and misgiving. Here comes the Abbé; treat him pleasantly until you have learnt more fully how much you owe him. The rogue! there he is, walking between Natalie and Therèse; I'll wager that he has some plan in his head. As on the whole he is rather fond of playing the part of Destiny, he cannot always resist his love for match-making either."

Wilhelm, whose passion and annoyance had by no means been mitigated by all Jarno's good and clever sayings, thought his friend most indelicate in alluding to such a relationship at that moment; and said, with a smile it is true, but one not devoid of bitterness: "I should have thought a love for match-making might have been left to those who have a love for each other."

CHAPTER VI.

THE party met again, and our friends were forced to break off their conversation. A short time later a courier was announced, who wished to deliver a letter into Lothario's own hands. The man was brought in; he looked vigorous and able, and his livery was handsome and in good taste. Wilhelm thought he knew him, and he was not mistaken; it was the man he had sent after Philine and the supposed Mariana, and who had never returned. He was just going to speak to him, when Lothario, who had been reading the letter, asked gravely and almost angrily: "What is your master's name?"

"Of all questions," answered the courier respectfully, "that is the one I least know how to answer. I hope the letter will tell all that need be told, for I have no orders to say anything."

"Let him be who he may," replied Lothario with a smile; "as your master has confidence enough in me to write such a merry letter, he shall be welcome here."

"He will not keep you waiting long," said the courier with a bow, and departed.

"Only listen to this wild, ridiculous dispatch," said Lothario. "My unknown correspondent writes: 'As a cheerful humour is said, when he puts in an appearance, to be the most agreeable of all guests,—and as I always take this pleasant person about with me in the capacity of travelling companion, I am convinced that the visit which I purpose paying to your well-beloved Grace will not be taken amiss; on the contrary, I hope that my arrival will be to the perfect satisfaction of the entire noble family, from whom in due season I shall again depart, and beg to remain, &c. &c. Count Snailfoot.'"

"That is a new family," said the Abbé.

"Possibly some deputy Count," said Jarno.

"The secret is not difficult to guess," said Natalie; "I would wager that it is our brother Friedrich; he has threatened us with a visit ever since my uncle's death."

"Rightly guessed, oh, wise and beautiful sister!" cried some one from a neighbouring shrubbery, and an agreeable-looking, merry young fellow at the same moment appeared; Wilhelm was almost on the point of crying out. "What!" he exclaimed, "is our fair-haired young rogue to turn up here too?"

This drew Friedrich's attention; he looked at Wilhelm, and exclaimed: "Verily, I should have been less surprised at beholding the famous Pyramids here in my uncle's garden, firmly as we know they are standing in Egypt—or the tomb of king Mausolus, which I am assured exists no longer, than to see you here, my old

friend and frequent benefactor. You have my warmest and best welcome!"

After greeting and kissing them all round he rushed upon Wilhelm again, crying: "Make much of him for my sake—this hero, leader of armies and dramatic philosopher! On our first acquaintance, I dressed his hair terribly,—I may say, indeed, I hackled it, as if it had been flax,—and yet afterwards he saved me from a sound thrashing. He is as magnanimous as Scipio, and as generous as Alexander; occasionally too he falls in love, but without hating his rivals. Not indeed that he heaps coals of fire on the heads of his enemies, which people say is but a poor service to render any one; no, on the contrary, when any one has carried off his fair lady, he sends good and trusty servants to see that they do not dash their foot against a stone."

In this style he went on unceasingly, without any one being able to check him, and as none of the party could answer him in the same strain, he kept the conversation nearly to himself. "Don't be surprised," he exclaimed, "at my being so well-read in sacred and profane lore; you shall hear how I came by my knowledge." They asked him how matters were going with him, and where he came from, but maxims and old stories kept him from arriving at any clear explanation.

Natalie said in a low voice to Therèse: "This kind of merriment pains me; I would wager that he is not really happy."

As, with the exception of a few jokes replied to by Jarno, Friedrich's fun could strike no answering chord in the party, he said: "There seems nothing left for me but to become grave too, in company with this grave family; and as in these critical circumstances the burden of my entire sins weighs heavily on my soul, I will

determine at once on making a full confession, of which, however, you, my worthy gentlemen and ladies, shall hear nothing. This noble-minded friend alone, who already knows something of my life and doings, shall receive it, and so much the more because he alone has any reason to ask for it. Are not you curious now," he went on, turning to Wilhelm, "to know the how and where—the when and why? how the conjugation of the charming Greek verb *Phileo*, *Philô* and its derivatives is going on?"

So saying, he took Wilhelm's arm and led him away, kissing and hugging him in every conceivable fashion. Friedrich had scarcely entered Wilhelm's room, when he discovered in the window a powder-knife with the inscription "Remember me." "You take good care of your treasures," he said; "why, this is Philine's powder-knife, the same she gave you on the day I pulled your hair so unmercifully. I hope you have often thought of the beautiful girl, when you used it; I assure you, she has not forgotten you, and if I had not long ago banished every trace of jealousy from my heart, I should not be able to look at you without envy."

"Don't talk to me any more about that creature," replied Wilhelm. "I do not deny that it was some time before I could get rid of the agreeable impression her presence made upon me, but that was all."

"Fie! for shame!" cried Friedrich. "Who would ever disown the girl he loved? and you were as completely in love with her as any one could wish. Not a day passed without your giving her some present, and when a German gives presents we may be certain that he loves. There was nothing left for me but to whisk her off, and the little scarlet officer managed it at last."

"What? were you the officer we saw at Philine's, and that she went off with?"

"Yes," replied Friedrich, "the one you took for Mariana. We've so often laughed at your mistake."

"What cruelty," exclaimed Wilhelm, "to leave me in such suspense!"

"And then, too, to take the courier you sent after us into our service!" replied Friedrich. "He's a famous fellow, and has never left us once the whole time. And I love that girl just as madly as ever. She has bewitched me in such a manner that I almost feel in mythological case, and live in daily fear of some transformation."

"Do tell me," said Wilhelm, "where you gained this extensive learning? I listen with astonishment to the singular way of referring to old stories and fables which you have adopted."

"I became learned, and, truth to say, very learned, in a most amusing way," said Friedrich. "Philine is with me now; we have hired an old castle from the man who farms the estate on which it stands, and we live there like the elves, as merrily as possible. We found a library there, small certainly, but select; containing a folio Bible, Gottfried's chronicles, two volumes of the *Theatrum Europæum*, the *Acerra Philologica*, the works of Gryphius, and a few more less important books. Now, I must confess, that when we had romped to our heart's content, we began to find matters a little tedious, so we took to reading; but behold, before we were aware, the tedium became more tedious than before! At last Philine hit upon the splendid idea of laying all the books open on a large table; we seated ourselves opposite to each other, and read one against the other, and only piecemeal, first out of one book and then out of another. This was most delightful! We could fancy ourselves in good

society, where it is not considered polite to dwell on any one subject too long, or even to discuss it thoroughly; and we could fancy ourselves too in very noisy company, where no one will let his neighbour get a word in edge-wise. We allow ourselves this amusement regularly every day, and are getting by degrees so learned as to be an astonishment even to ourselves. There is nothing new for us now under the sun; our knowledge offers us some authentic proof for everything. We vary this mode of instructing ourselves in many different ways. Sometimes we read by a broken old hour-glass which runs out in a few minutes. The one of us who has not been reading turns it in a moment, and begins to read out of one of the books, and scarcely is the sand in the lower glass than the other begins with a sentence, so that we really study in true academic style, only that our lessons are shorter and our studies extremely varied."

"I can quite understand this wild way of going on," said Wilhelm, "when once such a merry couple have come together, but how such a flighty couple can stay so long together, is a matter more difficult to conceive."

"That's just the happiness and the misfortune!" cried Friedrich. "Philine dares not be seen—indeed, she cannot bear even to look at herself; she is in the family way. Nothing was ever so shapeless and ridiculous in the world. A short time before I left her, she happened to pass before a glass. 'Pah!' she said, turning away; 'why it's Frau Melina as she lived and moved! odious sight! one looks perfectly vile.'"

"I must confess," said Wilhelm, "that it will be rather funny to see you two as father and mother."

"It certainly is an absurd piece of folly that, in addition to everything else, I should have to be considered a father; but she maintains it, and the time agrees. At first

that confounded visit which she paid you after Hamlet put me out a little."

"What visit?"

"You have surely never quite slept away the remembrance of that visit? The charming, tangible ghost of that night, though you may not know it, was Philine. The story was certainly a bitter dowry for me, but if a man cannot put up with such things he ought not to fall in love. Paternity, after all, is only a question of conviction; I am convinced, and so I am a father. This will show you that I know how to use logic in the right place. And if the child does not laugh itself to death the moment it is born, it may turn out, if not a useful, at all events an agreeable citizen of the world."

While the two friends were amusing themselves by talking over these frivolous matters, the rest of the party had entered on a grave conversation. Friedrich and Wilhelm had scarcely left them, when the Abbé took the others unperceived into a room entered from the garden, and when they were seated began his statement."

"We have," he said, "asserted in general terms, that Fräulein Thérèse is not the daughter of her mother; it is necessary that we should explain ourselves on this subject in detail. Here is the story, and I offer to authenticate it in every possible way.

"Frau von *** passed the first years of her married life very happily with her husband; they suffered however from one misfortune: the children, to whose arrival they had more than once looked forward with hope, came into the world dead; the third time this happened, the physicians announced that the mother was in the greatest danger, and prophesied her certain death if she should ever have another child. They were then compelled to come to some resolution; they did not wish to

dissolve their marriage; in a social point of view it suited them too well for that. In the cultivation of her mind, in a certain amount of social display, and in the pleasures of vanity, Frau von *** tried to find some compensation for the mother's happiness which had been denied her, and looked on indulgently and cheerfully when her husband began to take a fancy to a young lady who managed the entire housekeeping, possessed a beautiful figure, and a sterling character. After a short time, indeed, Frau von *** paved the way herself to an arrangement by which this good-natured girl gave way to the wishes of Therèse's father, continuing at the same time her care of the house, and showing, if possible, even more attention and submission to its mistress than before.

"After some time, she announced that there was hope of her becoming a mother, and at this juncture the same thought, though quite differently originated, occurred to both husband and wife. Herr von *** wished to have the child of one he really loved acknowledged as legitimate in his own house, and Frau von ***, annoyed that through the indiscretion of her physician her condition had become known in the neighbourhood, thought to regain consideration by means of a supposititious child, and by such a concession to retain an ascendancy in the house, which, under existing circumstances, she was afraid of losing. She was more reserved than her husband, and perceiving his wish, knew how to prepare the way for an explanation without making any advances. She made her own conditions, and gained nearly everything she asked; thus arose that will in which so little provision seemed to have been made for the child. The old physician was dead; they applied to a young, active and clever man, and rewarded him well; to him it was

an additional honour to expose and improve upon the precipitation and want of tact of his deceased colleague. The true mother consented not unwillingly; the deception was well managed, Therèse came into the world, and was imputed to a step-mother, while her own, by venturing out too soon, became a victim to the fraud, and died, leaving the good man inconsolable.

“Frau von *** meanwhile had entirely gained her end; in the eyes of the world she was the mother of a sweet child, whom she paraded before them most extravagantly; at the same time, she was freed from a rival whose position she had not been able to look on without envy, and whose influence, at least in the future, she feared in her secret heart. She loaded the child with tenderness, and in moments of familiar confidence knew so well how to attract her husband to herself by deep sympathy with his loss, that he gave himself up to her, you might say, entirely, placing both his own and the child's happiness in her hands so completely, that not till a short time before his death,—and even then, to a certain extent, only through his grown-up daughter,—did he regain the position of master in his own house. This, fair Therèse, was probably the secret that your father in his illness longed to reveal to you; it was this which, now that our young friend (who by the strangest combination in the world has become your betrothed) is absent, I wished to lay before you in detail. Here are the papers; they will strictly prove all that I have asserted. From them you will see at the same time how long I have been on the track of this discovery, and how impossible it was for me to arrive at any certainty earlier; how I did not dare to tell my friend of the possibility of our good fortune, knowing the deep wound a second disappointment of his hopes would have caused. You

will understand Lydia's suspicions; for I am quite willing to confess that I did not favour our friend's attachment to that good girl, after discovering that I might look forward to his marriage with Therèse."

No one made any reply to this story. A few days later, the ladies returned the papers without comment.

There were plenty of resources at hand to amuse the party, beside which, the neighbourhood offered so many attractions, that they enjoyed making excursions to see its beauties, sometimes alone, sometimes together, on horseback, driving, or on foot. On one of these occasions Jarno discharged his commission, and gave Wilhelm the papers, appearing however to ask for no decision from him.

"In the very strange position in which I find myself," said Wilhelm, after this, "I need only repeat to you what I said at first and at once, in Natalie's presence, and said certainly with a pure and single heart: Lothario and his friends have a right to demand any sacrifice from me: in saying this, I lay all my claims on Therèse in your hands; only procure me a speedy dismissal. Oh, my friend, the matter does not require much consideration! During the last few days, I have felt that it costs Therèse trouble even to keep up a mere show of the warmth with which she greeted me on her arrival here; I have been robbed of her affection, or rather I never possessed it."

"Such cases are probably better settled gradually, by silence and patient waiting," replied Jarno, "than by many words; the latter always produce a kind of embarrassment and ferment."

"I should have thought," said Wilhelm, "that just this case allowed of the calmest and most simple decision. People have so often reproached me for being dilatory

and undecided; and now that I have for once made up my mind, why do they commit the very same fault with regard to me, for which they have been blaming me? Does the world take so much trouble with our education only to show us that it does not choose to be educated itself? No, don't grudge me any longer the pleasant feeling that I am freed from an unsuitable connexion, into which I fell with the purest intentions in the world."

Notwithstanding this request, some days passed, during which he neither heard anything more on the subject, nor noticed any further change in his friend's behaviour; their conversation was confined to general and indifferent topics.

CHAPTER VII.

ONE day, when Natalie, Jarno and Wilhelm were sitting together, Natalie began: "You are thoughtful, Jarno; I have noticed it for some time already."

"Yes, I am," her friend answered; "I see an important affair before me, for which we have long been prepared, and which must now be taken in hand. You have a general idea of it, and I may certainly speak freely before our young friend, as it must depend on him whether he will take a share in it. You will not see me here much longer, for I am on the point of embarking for America."

"America!" said Wilhelm with a smile. "I should not have expected to hear of such a romantic scheme from you, and still less that you would have chosen me as your companion."

"When you are thoroughly acquainted with our plan," said Jarno, "you will give it a better name, and perhaps

even be prepossessed in its favour. Listen to me. It needs only a slight knowledge of what is now going on in the world, to see that we are on the verge of great changes, and that there is very little security for property anywhere."

"I have no clear idea of what is going on in the world," interrupted Wilhelm, "and I have only just begun to trouble myself about my property. Perhaps I should have done better to try and forget it still longer, if care for its safety makes people so hypochondriacal."

"Hear me out," said Jarno; "age ought to care, in order that youth may for a time be free from care. The balance in human affairs can unfortunately only be restored by contrasts. At the present time, it is anything but advisable to possess property in one place only, or to trust your money to only one investment; and yet on the other hand it is difficult to exercise supervision over one's affairs in many places; we have therefore originated something different. A society shall go forth from our old tower, which shall spread itself abroad in all parts of the world, and into which people from all parts of the world can be admitted. We shall mutually assure each other's existence against the possibility of some revolution driving one or other of us entirely from his property. I am now going to America, in order to turn to account the advantageous relations which our friend established during his stay there. The Abbé intends going to Russia, and you shall choose, in case you like to join us, whether you will help Lothario in Germany, or go with me. I should think you would prefer the latter; a long journey is extremely useful for a young man."

Wilhelm checked himself and answered: "Your offer deserves all consideration; for my motto will soon be: The further off, the better. I hope you will tell me more

about your plan. It may proceed from my ignorance of the world, but such an alliance seems to me beset with insuperable difficulties."

"Of which the greater part," answered Jarno, "will be removed only by the fact that up to the present time our party has been few in number, and those few have been honest, clever, decided people, possessing that sense for the universal from which alone a sense for what is social can arise."

Friedrich had hitherto been a listener only, but now he replied: "I'll go too, if you ask me prettily."

Jarno shook his head.

"Well, what fault have you to find with me?" Friedrich continued. "Young colonists are wanted in a new colony—I bring them with me at once, and merry colonists too, I can assure you. And then too I know of another kind good girl who is out of place now on this side of the water—that sweet, charming Lydia. What is the poor child to do with all her pain and sorrow, if she cannot find some opportunity of casting it into the depths of the sea, and if some honest man does not take pity on her? I should have thought, friend of my youth, that as it's in your line to comfort the forsaken, you would have decided on each of us taking his sweetheart under his arm, and following the old gentleman."

This proposal annoyed Wilhelm, and he answered with affected calmness: "I do not even know whether she is free; and as on the whole I do not seem to be fortunate in courtship, I would rather not make the attempt."

Natalie answered: "Brother Friedrich, you fancy that your own thoughtless way of acting will suit others too. Our friend deserves a woman's heart that will belong to him alone—that will not be moved by recollections of

others, while at his side; it was only with a thoroughly reasonable, pure character like Therèse's that such an experiment could be looked upon as advisable."

"An experiment!" cried Friedrich; "in love everything is an experiment. Whether in an arbour or before the altar—whether with embraces or with a gold ring—whether to the chirp of the cricket or to the sound of drums and trumpets, it's always an experiment, and owes everything to chance."

"I have always noticed," replied Natalie, "that our principles are a supplement to our lives. We are so glad to dress up our faults in the garment of some valid law. You had better take care which way the fair maiden who has fascinated you so powerfully and holds you so fast, is going to lead you."

"She is on a very good road herself," replied Friedrich; "the road to sainthood. She has certainly taken a round-about way, but so much the surer and merrier; Mary Magdalene went the same road, and who knows how many more beside? On the whole, sister, you ought not to mix yourself up in any talk about love. I believe you will never marry, unless some day a bride is missing somewhere, and then with your usual good-nature you will resign yourself to be the supplement of somebody's life. So let us settle our business with this man-stealer at once, and come to some agreement about our travelling party."

"You are too late with your proposals," said Jarno; "Lydia is provided for already."

"In what way?" said Friedrich.

"I have made her an offer of marriage myself," replied Jarno.

"Old gentleman," said Friedrich, "you've been performing a freak there, to which, if regarded as a sub-

stantive, various adjectives, and consequently if regarded as a subject, various predicates might be found."

"I must candidly confess," replied Natalie, "that it is a dangerous experiment to appropriate a girl just when she is in a state of desperation from love to some one else."

"But I have risked it," replied Jarno; "and on one condition she will be mine. And believe me, there is nothing in the world so valuable as a heart that is capable of love and passion. Whether it has loved or still loves is not the question. The love that is spent on another has almost more charm for me than the love that might be spent on myself; for I see the strength and power of this beautiful feeling, and the pure vision is not disturbed by self-love."

"Have you spoken to Lydia lately?" replied Natalie.

Jarno smiled and nodded; Natalie shook her head, saying as she rose from her seat: "I really do not know what to make of you all; however, you shall not confuse me."

She was just going to leave them, when the Abbé came in, with a letter in his hand, and said to her: "Pray remain! I have a proposal here in reference to which your advice will be welcome. Your late uncle's friend, the Marquis, whom we have been expecting for some time, must be here in a few days. He writes me word that he is not so much at home in the German language as he had fancied, and needs a companion who is master of that, and of one or two others beside; that, indeed, as he wishes to go more into scientific than political circles, such an interpreter is absolutely necessary to him. I can imagine no one more suited for this office than our young friend. He knows the language, and is well-informed on many other subjects, and it will

be very advantageous for him to see Germany in such good society and under such favourable conditions. Till a man has seen his native land he has no standard by which to judge foreign countries. What do you say, my friends? What do you say, Natalie?"

No one found any objection to the plan; Jarno did not even seem to consider his own American plan as a hindrance, because he had in no case intended to start at once; Natalie was silent, and Friedrich quoted various proverbs on the uses of travelling.

Wilhelm's inward indignation at this new proposal was so great that he could hardly hide it. He saw now, only too clearly, that there was a preconcerted scheme to get rid of him as soon as possible; and the worst point of the matter was, that they allowed it to appear so evidently—so entirely without consideration for his feelings. The suspicions aroused by Lydia, and all his own experiences, came back vividly to his mind, and the natural way in which Jarno had explained matters seemed, like all the rest, a mere piece of acting.

He mastered his feelings however, and answered: "This offer certainly deserves mature consideration."

"A speedy decision may possibly be necessary," replied the Abbé.

"I am not prepared for that at present," answered Wilhelm. "We can wait till this man appears, and then see whether we suit one another. One main condition however must be agreed to beforehand, and that is, that I may take my boy Felix with me, and introduce him everywhere."

"That condition will scarcely be granted," replied the Abbé.

"And I do not see," exclaimed Wilhelm, "why I

should submit to conditions dictated by any man whatever; or why, if I wish to see my native land, I must needs do so in the company of an Italian?"

"Because," replied the Abbé with a certain impressive gravity, "there are always reasons why a young man should travel with some one else."

Wilhelm, feeling that he should not be able to keep his temper much longer, as even Natalie's presence was only able to make his situation in some degree bearable, answered somewhat hurriedly: "Let me only have a short time for reflection; I suspect it will not take long to decide whether I have reason to make any further connexions, or whether—which is far more likely—feeling and wisdom will not imperatively command me to break loose from so many bonds,—bonds which threaten me with a perpetual and miserable captivity."

He uttered these words in great agitation of mind. A glance at Natalie calmed him in some measure, as in that moment of passionate feeling her appearance and real worth impressed him more than ever.

"Yes," he said to himself when he was alone, "confess that you love her, and that you feel once more what it is to love with a man's whole strength. I loved Mariana in this way, and fell into such fearful mistakes with regard to her; I loved Philine, and could not help despising her; Aurelia I esteemed, and could not love; I honoured Therèse, and fatherly love took the form of an attachment; and now, when all the feelings that ought to make a man happy are united in my heart, I am forced to fly! Oh! why must the unconquerable wish to possess, associate itself with all these feelings and perceptions? Why, without possession, will these feelings and convictions inevitably and thoroughly destroy every other kind

of happiness? Shall I ever be able in future to enjoy the sunshine, the beautiful world, society, or any other blessing? Shall I not always be saying to myself: Natalie is not there! and yet, alas! to me Natalie will be always there. If I close my eyes, she will stand before me; if I open them she will hover between me and every other object, like the impression left on one's eyes by a dazzling vision. Has not the figure of the Amazon been always present to your imagination, though it passed by so quickly? and you did not know her then—you had only seen her. Now that you know her—that you have been so near to her, and that she has shown so much interest in you, her qualities are as deeply engraven in your mind as ever her likeness was on your senses. It is tormenting to be always seeking, but far worse to have found, and then be forced to forsake. What more can I desire now in this world? What region—what city contains such a treasure as this? and I am to travel—only in order to find inferior beings? Is life like nothing but a race-course, where people must turn back directly they have reached the end? And does what ever is good and noble stand there like a fixed immoveable goal only, from which men have to take horse and hasten away, directly they fancy they have reached it, while those whose desire is fixed on earthly goods, can get what they long for in every region under heaven, or even at the common fair.

“Come, dear child!” he called out to his little boy, who just then came running up; “come and be everything to me, now and always. You were sent me to make up for the loss of your own beloved mother; you were to compensate for the second mother whom I had destined for you, and now you have a still larger void to fill up. Come, engage my heart—occupy my mind, with

your beauty, your sweetness, your desire for knowledge and your talents!"

The boy was busy over a new toy; his father tried to improve it for him; directly he had succeeded in putting it in order, the child lost all pleasure in it. "You are a true mortal," exclaimed Wilhelm; "come, my son, come my brother, let us amuse ourselves in the world without end or aim as well as we can."

His resolution to go away, taking Felix with him, and to divert his mind by seeing the world, was now become a settled purpose. He wrote to Werner for money and letters of credit, and sent Friedrich's courier with strict orders to return quickly. Annoyed as he felt with the rest of his friends, the relation between himself and Natalie remained pure and uninjured as ever. He confided his intentions to her; she too took it as an acknowledged fact that he was free to go, and that it would be necessary, and though he felt pained by this apparent indifference, her presence and kindness thoroughly calmed him. She advised him to visit certain towns, in order to make the acquaintance of her friends there. The courier returned, bringing what Wilhelm had asked for, but Werner did not seem satisfied with this new excursion. "My hopes," he wrote, "that you were becoming reasonable, are once more deferred for a season. Wherever are you all rambling to now? and what has become of the lady of whose assistance in our farming-matters you gave me some hope? The other friends too are not there, and the whole business has been turned over to the lawyer and myself. It is fortunate that he understands law as thoroughly as I do finance, and that we are both accustomed to be prettily well loaded. Fare thee well! Your erratic ways shall be forgiven, as without them we could not have established our-

selves so well in this part of the country as we have done."

So far as outward matters were concerned, Wilhelm might have set off now at any moment, but his mind was still held fast by two hindrances. They persisted in refusing to show him Mignon's body, before the obsequies intended to be held by the Abbé, and for this solemnity the preparations were not yet complete. The doctor, too, had been summoned away by a strange letter from the country parson. This related to the Harper, and Wilhelm wanted further information about his fate.

In this condition, he could find no rest for soul or body, either by day or night. When every one else was asleep, he would wander about the house. The presence of those old, well-known works of art attracted and at the same time repelled him. He could neither hold the things around him fast, nor let them go; everything brought everything else back to his recollection; he could look down on the entire circle of his life, but, sad to say, the ring lay broken into pieces at his feet, and seemed as if it would never unite again. The pictures and statues that his father had sold seemed to him a symbol of himself:—that he was to be partly shut out from the quiet and complete possession of what was desirable in this world, and partly robbed of it, either through his own fault or the fault of others. Sometimes he became so lost in these strange, sad meditations, as almost to fancy himself a ghost, and even while touching and handling the objects around him, he could hardly resist questioning whether he was alive there and then.

It was only the acute pain that sometimes seized him when he remembered how wrongfully he was being forced to forsake all that he had found—found for the second time,—only his tears, that restored him to a sense of

existence. It was in vain that he tried to remember how fortunate his circumstances were in reality: "I see," he would cry out, "that everything else is as nothing, if the one thing, that for human beings is worth all the rest, is wanting!"

The Abbé announced the arrival of the Marquis. "You seem determined," he said to Wilhelm, "to set out on your journey alone with your little boy, but you really ought at least to make the acquaintance of this man; wherever you may meet him in after life, he will be sure to be useful to you." The Marquis appeared; he was not by any means an old man—one of those well-built, agreeable figures you meet among the Lombards. In his youth he had formed acquaintance with Natalie's uncle,—who was considerably his senior,—first in the army, and later in affairs; after this they had travelled through a great part of Italy together, and most of the works of art which the Marquis found here, had been bought or procured in his own presence and in connexion with happy incidents that he had by no means forgotten.

The Italian has altogether a deeper feeling for the high dignity of art than other nations. Every man who does anything at all, wishes to be styled Artist, Master or Professor, and by this passion for a title at least, if by nothing else, acknowledges that it is not enough to catch up something merely by tradition, or to attain a certain facility by practice; he confesses that every man ought to be capable of exercising thought in relation to what he does;—of laying down principles, and making clear to himself and others, the reasons why he does one thing in preference to another.

The stranger was affected at seeing these treasures again without their possessor, but delighted to find the

spirit of his friend still speaking through those he had left behind him. They went through all the various works of art, and found great pleasure in being able to make themselves mutually understood. The Marquis and the Abbé led the conversation; Natalie, who felt as if she were with her uncle again, was quite at home in their opinions and sentiments; Wilhelm, if he wanted to understand what they were saying, was obliged to translate it into theatrical terms; and as to Friedrich, they had enough to do to keep his jokes within due bounds. Jarno was seldom present.

On hearing the remark that first-rate works of art were so rare in modern days, the Marquis said: "It is no easy thing to perceive and estimate what circumstances must do for an artist; and then too, even with the greatest genius and the most decided talent, the demands that he must make upon himself are endless—the diligence that he must apply to the cultivation and development of his genius and talent unspeakable. Now, if circumstances do but little for him—if he sees that the world is easily satisfied and does not ask for more than an easily understood, pleasing and agreeable semblance, it would be strange if indolence and self-love did not tie him down to mediocrity; strange if he did not prefer bartering fashionable trash for fame and money, to choosing the right way, which leads more or less to a pitiful martyrdom. This is the reason why the artists of our own day are always offering, but never give. They wish to keep us charmed, but not to satisfy us; nothing is more than hinted at, and you can find neither basis nor details. It is only necessary to pass a few hours quietly in a gallery, noticing which are the works of art most attractive to the crowd—which are praised and which neglected;—after this you will feel

but little pleasure in the present, and but little hope for the future."

"Yes," replied the Abbé, "and thus the lovers of art and the artists mutually train each other; the purchaser only looks out for a general, indefinite kind of enjoyment; the work of art is to please him much in the same way as a work of nature, and people believe that the organs necessary to the enjoyment of art develop themselves without effort, like the tongue or the palate—that they can pronounce upon a work of art as they could upon a dish at dinner. They do not understand the quite different kind of culture required if you wish to raise yourself to the true enjoyment of art. The thing that seems most difficult to me, is the kind of isolation which a man must bring about in himself, if he wishes to cultivate himself in any way; this accounts for the large amount of one-sided educations, each of which nevertheless takes upon itself to dogmatize about the whole."

"What you are saying is not quite clear to me," said Jarno, coming up at that moment.

"No," replied the Abbé, "it is difficult to explain one's self clearly and briefly on this point. Thus much only I will say: any one who lays claim to different kinds of work and of enjoyment, must, at the same time, be capable of cultivating in himself different organs independently of each other. He who wishes to enjoy everything with his whole nature—to unite everything outside of himself into one delight, will spend his time in an endless and unsatisfied effort. How difficult it is—though apparently so natural—to look at a good statue, or a first-rate painting apart from every other consideration but itself, to listen to singing for its own sake alone, to admire the actor in the actor, to delight in a building for the sake of its intrinsic harmony and its lasting

qualities. But we see most people treating decided works of art as if they were lumps of soft clay. The chiselled marble is to remodel itself instantly, and the firm pile of building to expand or contract according to their predilections, opinions or caprices; the painting is to teach, the play to do us good, and each thing to be everything. In truth, because most people have no distinct form—because they cannot give themselves and their doings any definite shape, they labour to deprive other objects of their distinct form, that everything may turn into the same light, uncertain stuff of which they are made themselves. They reduce everything at last to its so-called *effect*; everything is to be relative, and so in fact everything becomes relative, except their own folly and want of taste, which rule in the most absolute fashion.”

“I understand you,” replied Jarno; “or rather I quite see how what you say agrees with the principles you hold so firmly; but I could not possibly be so hard on my fellow-creatures—poor devils! Yet I know plenty of them, who on looking at the grandest works of art or nature, are instantly reminded of their own most paltry desires—who take their conscience and their morality with them to the opera—who cannot lay aside their love and hatred even when entering a classic colonnade, and in their own conceptions, must cut down everything that is brought them from without—even the best and grandest—in order, in some degree, to connect it with their own poverty-stricken natures.”

CHAPTER VIII.

In the evening the Abbé summoned them to Mignon's funeral. The whole party proceeded to the Hall of the

Past, and found it illuminated and decorated in the most remarkable manner. The walls were so covered with sky-blue draperies, that only the frieze above, and the plinth below appeared to view. Large wax torches were burning in the four candelabra in the corners, and others of a proportionate size in the four smaller ones which stood round the sarcophagus in the centre. By this last stood four boys, dressed in sky-blue and silver; they held large fans, made of ostrich feathers, with which they seemed to be wafting air to a figure resting on the sarcophagus. The company seated themselves, and two invisible choirs began to sing very sweetly, asking: "Whom are ye bringing into this quiet company?" The four boys answered with lovely voices: "We are bringing you a weary playfellow; let her rest with you till her heavenly sisters waken her again with their joyful shouts."

CHOIR.

Welcome! thou first-fruit of youth in our circle! But we mourn as we welcome thee. May'st thou be followed neither by youth nor maiden! May age alone, calmly and willingly, draw near these quiet halls, and the dear, dear child rest in serious company!

BOYS.

Ah! how reluctantly we brought her hither! And, alas! she must remain here! Let us stay here too, let us weep—weep by the side of her coffin!

CHOIR.

But look at her strong wings! Look at her light, pure robe! See how the golden band on her head gleams, and gaze on her beautiful, dignified rest!

BOYS.

Ah! but the wings do not raise her; her robe does not flutter now in merry play; when we crowned her with roses she used to look sweetly and kindly at us.

CHOIR.

Look up with the eyes of your spirits! May that transforming power live in you which bears our best and loveliest, and life itself, up beyond the stars!

BOYS.

But alas! we miss her here; she never wanders in the garden now; she never gathers the field-flowers. Let us weep, for we are leaving her here! Let us weep and stay with her!

CHOIR.

Children, return to life! May the fresh air that plays about the winding brook dry your tears! Flee from night! Day-light, joy and continuance are the lot of the living.

BOYS.

Up then! we will return to life. May the day give us work and joy, till evening comes to bring us rest, and nightly sleep to refresh us.

CHOIR.

Children, hasten upward into life! May love meet you, in the pure robe of beauty, with a heavenly gaze and the crown of immortality!

The boys were already gone; the Abbé rose from his seat, and stood behind the coffin. "It is the appoint-

ment," he began, "of him who prepared this quiet dwelling-place, that each new comer should be received with solemn rites. The first whom we have brought hither after himself,—the builder of this house, the founder of this sanctuary,—is a young stranger; and thus this small space already contains two entirely different victims of the inexorable goddess of death. Our entrance into life is ruled by fixed laws; the days that mature us to see the light are numbered; but there is no law for the duration of life. The weakest thread of existence draws out to an unexpected length, and the strongest is violently severed by the scissors of that Fate who seems to take delight in contradictions. Of the child whom we are burying now we have but little to say. We do not even yet know whence she came; we are not acquainted with her parents, and can only guess at the number of her years. Her deep, reserved heart, scarcely allowed us to conjecture its inmost secrets; nothing in her was clear, nothing manifest, but her love to the man who had saved her from the hands of a barbarian. This tender affection—this eager thankfulness—seems to have been the flame that burnt out the oil of life; the physician's skill could not preserve that fair young life, nor the most thoughtful friendship lengthen it. But though art had no power to fetter the departing spirit, it has used every means to preserve the body, and to rescue it from perishing. A balsamic preparation has penetrated all the veins, and now supplies the colour in her so early faded cheek. Come nearer, my friends, and gaze on this miracle of art and pains."

He lifted the veil: the child lay there in her angel's dress, and as if sleeping sweetly. They all came up and admired the marvellous semblance of life. Wilhelm alone remained in his seat; he could not control his

feelings—he dared not think of what he was feeling;—it seemed indeed as if thought would destroy emotion.

The oration had been delivered in French, out of consideration for the Marquis. He came up with the rest, and looked attentively at the lying figure. The Abbé went on: "This kind heart, so closed towards men, was steadily turned to its God with a holy confidence. Humility, nay, even a desire to abase herself outwardly, seemed innate in her. She adhered eagerly to the Catholic religion, in which she had been born and brought up. She often expressed her inward wish to rest in consecrated ground, and, according to the usages of the church, we have consecrated this marble tomb, and the small quantity of earth which is concealed in her pillow. How fervently, in her last moments, did she kiss an image of the Crucified One, which was delicately drawn on her tender arm with hundreds of punctures." As he said these words, he uncovered her right arm, and they saw—drawn in a bluish tint on the white skin—a crucifix, surrounded by various letters and signs.

The Marquis came closer, in order to inspect this new appearance more narrowly. "Oh God!" he cried, raising himself from his stooping posture, and lifting his hands to Heaven, "my poor child, my unfortunate niece! Is it you that I see before me? It is a painful pleasure to find you again thus—you whom we had given up so long—whose precious body we believed had become a prey to the fish that swim beneath the waters of the lake! here I find you again, and though dead, yet preserved to us! And I am present at your funeral—so beautiful outwardly, and rendered still more beautiful by the kind and good friends who are bringing you to your last rest. When I am able to speak," he added in a broken voice, "I will thank them."

Tears prevented him from saying more; and by touching a spring, the Abbé lowered Mignon's corpse into the marble sarcophagus. Four youths, dressed like the boys, came from behind the curtains, raised the heavy and beautifully ornamented lid on to the coffin, and began their song:

THE YOUTHS.

The treasure—that lovely vision of the past—is safe now. It sleeps within the marble, unscathed; it lives and acts in your hearts. Return ye!—return to life! But take with you a holy earnestness; for earnestness alone—that holy feeling—can turn life into eternity.

The invisible choir joined in as they were singing the last sentence, but not one of the party heard the strengthening words; they were all too much occupied with the strange discovery, and with their own feelings. The Abbé and Natalie led the Marquis out of the Hall, followed by Lothario and Therèse with Wilhelm, but no sooner had the sound of the choir died away in the distance, than grief, the remembrance of what they had seen, and curiosity, exerted their power once more, and they longed to return to the scene they had just left.

CHAPTER IX.

THOUGH the Marquis avoided speaking openly on the subject, he had some long conversations with the Abbé in private. When the whole party were together, he would often ask for music, and his request was readily granted, as every one was thankful to be relieved from the necessity of talking. After some days had passed in this way, they saw that he was making ready

for his journey. One day he said to Wilhelm: "I have no wish to disturb that dear child's remains; let her rest in the place where she loved and suffered; but her friends must promise to visit me in her native land—in the place where she was born and brought up; they must see the pillars and statues which she had never quite forgotten. I will take them to see the little bays where she was so fond of picking up pebbles. And you, my dear young friend, will not shun the gratitude of a family that owes you so much. I shall set out on my journey to-morrow. I have confided the whole story to the Abbé; he will tell it to you. He could forgive me for being at times interrupted by my grief, but as a third person he will be able to tell the story more connectedly. If, as the Abbé has suggested, you would like to join me in my German tour, you will be most welcome. Bring your boy with you; any trifling inconvenience that he may cause us will serve as a reminder of the kind care you showed to my poor niece."

That very evening they were surprised by the unexpected arrival of the Countess. Wilhelm trembled in every limb as she came in; and she, though prepared beforehand, leant upon her sister, who speedily gave her a chair. Her dress was strangely simple, and her appearance very much altered. Wilhelm scarcely dared to glance towards her; she spoke to him kindly, and the few indifferent phrases did not suffice to hide her sentiments and feelings. As the Marquis had retired early, and the rest of the party had no wish to separate, the Abbé produced a manuscript, saying, as he did so: "I wrote down the strange story directly it was confided to me. There is nothing in which we should be less sparing of pen and ink, than in recording the details of remarkable events."

The matter in hand having been explained to the Countess, the Abbé began to read:

“Much as I have seen of the world,” said the Marquis in telling me, “I shall never cease to look upon my father as one of the strangest of men. He had a noble, straightforward character; his ideas were liberal, one might even say grand; he was strict towards himself; there was a scrupulous consistency in all his plans, and his dealings were prosecuted steadily and uninterruptedly. Easy as it was, on the one hand, therefore, to associate or transact business with him, these qualities, on the other, made it very difficult for him to accommodate himself to the world. He demanded of government, his neighbours, his children and servants, the observance of the same laws which he had imposed upon himself; his most moderate demands became exaggerated through his own strictness, and he could enjoy nothing because it had not been brought to pass in his own way. At the very moment when he was building a palace, laying out a garden, or purchasing a large estate in the finest situation, I have seen him full of the gravest indignation, because convinced that fate had condemned him to privation and endurance. In his outward manner, he maintained the greatest dignity; if he joked it was to show the power of his understanding; he could not endure blame, and the only time that I ever saw him quite beyond his own control, was when he had heard that one of his own institutions had been spoken of as ridiculous. In the same spirit he disposed of his children and property. My eldest brother was brought up as befits a man who has large expectations. I was to enter the church, and the youngest to go into the army, I was full of life and fire, active, quick, clever in gymnastic exercises; he more inclined to dreamy rest,

fond of science, music and poetry; and yet, only after the hardest struggle and the most perfect conviction that it was impossible for either of us to fulfil the vocation my father had chosen, did he yield, and reluctantly allow us to exchange them: and even then, though he saw our satisfaction, he could not reconcile himself to the change, and declared that no good would come of it. The older he grew, the more he felt cut off from all society. At last he lived almost entirely alone. His only associate was an old friend, who had served in the German army, had lost his wife during a campaign, and had brought back a daughter, about ten years old. This man bought a pretty little estate in the neighbourhood, came to see my father on certain fixed days and hours in every week, and sometimes brought his daughter with him on these visits. He never contradicted my father, who at last became quite used to him and tolerated him as his only bearable companion. After my father's death, we found that this man had been famously provided for, and had by no means been wasting his time: he increased his property, and his daughter could look forward to a good dowry. The girl grew up and was wonderfully beautiful; my elder brother used often to joke with me, and say I had better woo her.

“Meanwhile my brother Augustine had been passing his time most strangely in a monastery. He had given himself up entirely to the enjoyment of religious sentiment, that kind of emotion—partly spiritual, partly physical—which raised him to the third heaven at times, and at others allowed him to sink down into a gulf of impotent and inane wretchedness. During my father's lifetime no change could be thought of; indeed, what could we have wished or suggested? After his death my brother came to see us constantly, and his state of mind,

which at first had distressed us very much, became by degrees more tolerable; his reason gained the upper hand. The more surely, however, this very reason promised him perfect contentment and health in a pure and natural life, so much the more earnestly did he entreat us to release him from his vows; he gave us to understand that he was thinking of Sperata, our neighbour's daughter.

"My eldest brother had suffered too much from our father's severity, not to be moved by his younger brother's condition. We talked the matter over with our family confessor, a worthy old man, explained to him the two ends our brother had in view, and begged him to clear the way and help us. Contrary to his usual custom he delayed, and when my brother at last so urged us that we pressed the matter more importunately on him, he was obliged to resolve on revealing to us the strange story.

"Sperata was our own sister; our father's, as well as our mother's, child, but born in their old age. A short time before she came into the world, a similar case had excited so much merriment in the neighbourhood, that my father, afraid of exposing himself to the same ridicule, determined to hide this late though lawful fruit of love as carefully, as people are used to conceal its earlier and accidental fruits. Our mother's confinement was kept strictly private; the child was taken into the country, and the old friend of the family—the only person, beside our confessor, who was in the secret—was easily persuaded to pass her off as his own daughter. The confessor made one condition only—that in a case of great emergency he should be allowed to reveal the secret. The father was dead, the delicate girl was living under the care of an old woman; we knew that our brother had

already introduced himself to her by means of music and song, and as he was continually begging us to break his old bonds, in order to form this fresh one, it seemed most necessary to tell him as soon as possible of the danger that was hanging over him.

“He gazed at us wildly and contemptuously. ‘Spare your improbable stories,’ he cried, ‘for children and credulous fools; you cannot tear Sperata from my heart; she is mine. Abjure at once your horrible spectre; it can only disturb me in vain. Sperata is not my sister, she is my wife!’—Then he gave a rapturous description of the way in which this heavenly girl had led him out of his unnatural isolation from humanity, into true life, how their minds were in as perfect harmony as their voices, and how he blessed all his sufferings and errors for having kept him hitherto so far from all other women, that now he could devote himself entirely to this sweet and lovely girl. We were terrified; his condition distressed and grieved us; yet we could do nothing, for he declared vehemently that Sperata had a child already. Our confessor did all that he felt to be his duty, but this only made matters worse. My brother vehemently contested all the relations of nature and religion, the rights of morality and the laws of civil life. In his eyes there was nothing sacred but his union with Sperata, nothing honourable but the titles, father and wife. ‘These, and these only,’ he exclaimed, ‘are in conformity with nature; the rest are nothing but caprices and opinions. Have not noble nations existed who permitted marriage with a sister? Don’t talk of your gods!’ he cried; ‘you never use their names unless you want to deceive us, and lead us away from the paths of nature; or by dint of shameful compulsion to brand our noblest impulses as crimes. You bury your victims alive and

force them into the greatest confusions and abuses, both of their mental and bodily powers.

“I may be allowed to speak, for none have suffered as I; I have sunk from the highest, sweetest perfection of enthusiasm down to that awful wilderness of weakness, emptiness, annihilation and despair—from the most exalted visions of the supernatural to that most complete unbelief—unbelief in myself. I have drunk that cup—so flattering at its surface—down to its horrible dregs, and my being is poisoned to its very centre. And now that merciful nature has healed me by her best gift—by love;—now that, by being united to this heavenly girl, I can feel assured of my own existence and of hers, can know that we are one, and that from this living union a third being is to arise and smile at us,—now you open upon me your hell-fire and your purgatory,—flames which can only scorch diseased imaginations,—and oppose them to the vivid, real, indestructible enjoyment of pure love! Come to meet us under the cypresses which raise their solemn tops towards Heaven!—visit us in the fenced gardens, when we are walking among the blossoming lemon and orange trees, and the delicate myrtle is offering us its tender blossoms, and then terrify us with those grey, gloomy nets that men have spun, if you dare!”

“For a long time he thus persisted in obstinately refusing to believe our story, and even at last, when we asseverated the truth of it most solemnly, and the confessor confirmed what we said, instead of being shaken or perplexed, he exclaimed: ‘Do not ask the echoes of your cloisters, your mouldy old parchments or your narrow-minded fancies and rules! Ask Nature and your own hearts; she will teach you what are the things at which you ought to shudder; she will point her finger in

the sternest way at that which she has eternally and irrevocably cursed. Look at the lilies: do not husband and wife grow on the same stalk? Are not both of them united by the flower that gave birth to both, and yet is not the lily the emblem of innocence, and are not these brotherly and sisterly unions fruitful? When Nature abhors, she speaks loudly; the creature that ought not to be, cannot be; the creature that is living a false life, is destroyed early. Unfruitfulness, a meagre and miserable existence and a premature decay, these are her curses, the tokens of her severity. She punishes only by direct consequences. Look around you,—whatever is forbidden, whatever is accursed will strike your eye at once. In the quiet of the cloister, and in the noisy turmoil of the world, thousands of deeds on which her curse rests are sanctioned and honoured. She looks sorrowfully down on indolence, as well as on overtaxed strength—on arbitrary power and superfluous luxury, as well as on need and poverty; she exhorts to moderation; the relations she establishes are true and real; her modes of operation calm. Whoever has suffered as I have, has a right to be free. *Sperata* is mine, and only Death shall take her from me. How I am to keep possession of her? how I am to be happy with her? that is your affair! I shall go to her now, and never leave her again.'

“He wanted to go at once to the boat, in order to cross the lake to her; but we prevented him, entreating him not to take a step that might be followed by the most frightful consequences. We begged him to consider that he was not living in the free world of his own thoughts and notions, but in a constituted order of things, the laws and established relations of which had become as fixed as the laws of nature herself. We were obliged to promise the confessor that we would not even let our

brother go out of our sight, much less out of the house; on our doing this, he went away, promising to return in a few days. What we had foreseen took place; my brother's strength to resist had come from his understanding, but his heart was weak; early religious impressions revived, and the most awful doubts seized on him. He passed two fearful days and nights; the confessor came to his help, but all in vain. His unfettered understanding absolved him; but his feelings, his religion, and all his old, habitual ideas declared him guilty.

"One morning we found his room empty; a letter was lying on the table, in which he explained that as we kept him a prisoner by force, he was justified in freeing himself: he should fly to Sperata, and hoped to be able to escape with her; he was prepared for the worst in case any attempt was made to separate them.

"We were very much frightened, but the confessor begged us to be calm. Our poor brother had been closely enough watched: the boatmen, instead of taking him over to the other side, had carried him back to the monastery. Tired out by those forty wakeful hours, he had fallen asleep in the boat directly it began to rock in the moonshine, and only awoke to find himself once more in the hands of his spiritual brethren—only recovered from his fatigue to hear the convent-gates close behind him.

"We were so distressed at his fate that we reproached the confessor bitterly; but the venerable man soon silenced us, by using the surgeon's argument, that pity for the patient might prove fatal: that he was not acting on his own responsibility, but by command of the bishop and the council: that their design in doing this was to avoid all public scandal, and throw the veil of secret ecclesiastical discipline over the sad story. Sperata was

to be spared; she was not to be told that her lover and her brother were the same person. She was put under the care of the same priest to whom she had already confided her condition. This, and her confinement, were concealed from the world, and when she became a mother, she was very happy in her little child. Like most girls in Italy, she could neither write nor read writing, and therefore gave the confessor many a message to deliver to her lover. The priest, thinking that a pious fraud might fairly be practised on behalf of this young mother, so long as she was suckling her child, brought her news of our brother, whom he never saw, exhorted her in his name to be calm, begged her to take care of herself and her little one, and trust in God for the future.

“Sperata was naturally religious; and her present lonely position increased this feature of her character; the priest encouraged it, in order to pave the way for an eternal separation. Almost before her child was weaned, or he could believe her strong enough to bear such fearful mental anguish, he began to paint the crime of her connexion with a priest in the most awful colours; he treated it indeed as a kind of sin against nature—as incest. For he had the idea of producing in her a repentance equal to that which she would have felt, had she known the true nature of her sin. By thus filling her mind with anguish and misery, and at the same time exalting the idea of the Church and its head—by pointing out that to give way in such cases, and as it were reward the culprits by allowing them to be legally united, would be attended by fearful consequences for the salvation of all men—and by showing her the blessedness of so atoning for sin in time, as to be rewarded with a crown of glory in eternity—he induced her to bare her neck to

the axe like a poor criminal, and earnestly entreat for an eternal separation from our brother. Having reached this point, she was allowed, though under certain restrictions, to live either in her own home or in the convent as she thought fit.

“Her child grew, and soon gave signs of a remarkable temperament. She could run alone, and was very agile when quite a little creature, sang very prettily, and learnt to play on the cithern almost without help. But she could not express herself in words, and the difficulty seemed to lie more in her mind than in the organs of speech. The poor mother, meanwhile, felt her relationship to her child to be but a sad one; the priest's method of treatment had so confused her ideas, that she was in the strangest condition of mind possible, short of actual madness. Her crime seemed daily more dreadful and more deserving of punishment; the confessor's constantly repeated analogy of incest had impressed itself so deeply on her mind, that at last she felt the same abhorrence and disgust as if she had really been acquainted with the relationship. The confessor was not a little proud of the artifice by which he had so cruelly broken this poor creature's heart. It was pitiable to see how the mother's love was longing to rejoice in the child's existence, and yet had to struggle with the awful thought that her little one had no right to be there. At times these feelings strove within her—at others abhorrence gained the mastery over love.

“The child had long been taken from her, and put under the care of some good people living on the shore of the lake, where, being allowed greater freedom, she soon began to show a remarkable fondness for climbing. Her natural instinct was to climb the highest peaks, clamber along the edges of the boats, and imitate the

wildest tricks of any rope-dancers who might chance to come to the village.

“In order to do this with greater ease, she was fond of putting on boys’ clothes, and though her foster-parents objected to it as most indecorous and inadmissible, we gave way to her as far as possible. Her strange wanderings and climbing excursions often led her far from home; she sometimes lost her way and staid out longer, but always came back again. On her return she generally seated herself under the pillared porch of a country-house in the neighbourhood; people gave up going to look for her; they expected her there. She would seem to be resting herself on the steps; then she would run into the large hall, and afterwards, if no one detained her, would hasten home.

“But at last our hopes were disappointed, and we were punished for our indulgence. The child was missing; her hat was found floating on the water not far from the spot where a torrent rushed into the lake. It was supposed that she had met with an accident while climbing about between the rocks; and notwithstanding the most diligent search, her body could not be found.

“Through the incautious gossip of her companions, Sperata soon heard of her child’s death; but she seemed calm and cheerful, and took no pains to hide her feeling of thankfulness to God for having taken the poor little creature to Himself, and so preserved her from suffering or causing some still worse misfortune.

“On this occasion all the legends connected with our lake were brought up. They said it must have one innocent child every year; but that the waters could not endure a dead body, and sooner or later it would be cast on shore, even to the smallest bone, however deep it might have sunk beneath the water. They told how

a disconsolate mother, whose child had been drowned in the lake, had called upon God and His saints to grant her its bones, if nothing else, that she might bury them; how the very next storm had brought the skull to shore, another the body, and then, when all the bones were together, she had put them into a cloth and carried them to church. But, marvellous to relate, as she entered the temple her bundle had grown heavier and heavier, and at last, when she laid it on the altar steps, the child had begun to cry, and, to every one's astonishment, had come forth out of the cloth; one small bone of the little finger alone was wanting; this the mother most carefully sought for, and, when she had found it, laid it up among the relics in the church.

"This story made a deep impression on the poor mother; her imagination took a fresh flight, and its new power was on the side of her feelings. She took it as an admitted thing that the child had borne the punishment, not only of its own, but of its parents' sins: that the curse and penalty, which had hitherto been hanging over them, were now entirely removed: and that, if she could only find the bones and carry them to Rome, the child would stand once more before the people, clothed in its own fair young flesh, on the steps of the high altar in St. Peter's. She would gaze upon her father and mother with her bodily eyes, and the Pope, convinced by this miracle of the sanction of God and His saints, would forgive her parents their sin, absolve them from it, and unite them in marriage, amidst the loud acclamations of the people.

"She cared for nothing now, and looked at nothing but the lake and its shore. At night, when the waves were breaking in the moonlight, she fancied every shining crest was bringing her child with it; and some one

was obliged to make a pretence of running down to the lake to receive the body.

“By day she was never tired of going to the places where the pebbly shore sloped very gradually into the water; she put all the bones she could find into a little basket. No one dared to tell her that they were the bones of animals; she buried the larger ones, and kept the smaller. This was the unceasing occupation of her life. The priest, who by the ceaseless performance of his duty, had brought her into this condition, did all he possibly could for her in it. Through his influence, she was looked upon in the neighbourhood, not as a mad person, but as one in a trance; the people stood with folded hands when she passed by, and the children kissed her hand.

“The share that her old friend and former companion might have had in bringing about the unhappy union, was forgiven her by the confessor on one condition: that she should faithfully and unremittingly attend upon the miserable woman for the entire remainder of her life; and this duty she performed to the last with the most admirable patience and conscientiousness.

“We, meanwhile, had not lost sight of our brother; neither the physicians nor the clergy belonging to his monastery would allow us an interview with him, but in order to convince ourselves that, so far as was possible for him in his sad state, he was in good care, we were allowed to watch him whenever we liked in the garden, the cloisters, or even through a window in the ceiling of his room.

“After passing through a number of strange and dreadful periods, he had fallen into a singular state of mental calm and bodily restlessness. He scarcely ever sat down except to play upon his harp, and then he

generally sang to it. At other times he was incessantly in motion, but tractable and obedient in everything; for all his passions seemed to have resolved themselves into one—the fear of death. The threat of dangerous illness or death would persuade him to anything.

“In addition to the strange habit of walking indefatigably about the monastery, and letting it be plainly understood that it would be better still to be wandering over the hills and valleys, he used to speak of an apparition which often terrified him. He declared that when he awoke, at whatever hour of the night it might be, a beautiful boy was standing at the foot of his bed, threatening him with a bare-bladed knife. He was put into another room, but he maintained that there too, and indeed at last, in other parts of the monastery, the boy lay in wait for him. His wanderings up and down grew more restless than ever, and they remembered afterwards that at that time he had been seen oftener than usual standing at the window, and gazing across the lake.

“Our poor sister, meanwhile, seemed gradually wearing away under the pressure of her one thought and her limited occupation, and our physician suggested that the bones of a child's skeleton should be introduced by degrees among those she had collected, so as to encourage her hopes. The experiment was a doubtful one, but thus much at least seemed to be gained by it, that, when all the different parts were together, she could be induced to desist from her incessant search, and hopes of a journey to Rome held out to her.

“This was done; her companion exchanged unperceived the little bones that had been confided to her, for those that Sperata had found, and you would hardly believe the expression of delight that shone in the poor invalid's face, as one by one the different parts came

together, and they could distinctly point out what were still wanting. She had carefully fastened every bone in its right place with threads and pieces of ribbon, and had filled up the interstices with silk and embroidery, in the way usually adopted in order to honour the relics of saints.

“In this way the limbs had all been put together, and only a few of the extremities were still wanting. One morning the doctor called to enquire after her while she was still asleep, and the old woman took the beloved remains out of the little box which stood in her sleeping-room, to show him how his patient occupied herself. Soon after, they heard her jump out of bed; she raised the cloth and found the box empty. She fell on her knees, and when they came in they heard her praying fervently and joyfully. ‘Yes,’ she cried, ‘it is true, it was not a dream, it is real! My friends, rejoice with me! I have seen the dear little creature alive again. She rose and threw away the veil; her brightness illumined the room, her beauty was transfigured into glory. She could not touch the ground, though she wished to do so; she was gently raised into the air, and could not even give me her hand. Then she called me to her, and showed me the way I was to go. I shall follow her—and follow her soon; I feel it, and my heart is lightened of its load. My grief is all gone, and merely to look at my risen child has given me a foretaste of heaven’s joy.’

“From that time her mind was busied with the happiest thoughts and prospects; she paid no attention to anything earthly, ate very sparingly, and her spirit freed itself by degrees from its bodily fetters. They found her at last, quite unexpectedly, lying pale as death, and devoid of all sensation; she never opened her eyes again; she was what we call, dead.

"The report of the vision soon spread among the people, and the veneration she had enjoyed during her life-time changed after death into the feeling that she must not only be considered as saved, but looked upon as a saint.

"When she was being carried to her burial, the people crowded round in the greatest excitement; they wanted to touch her hand, or, if not that, at least her dress. In their passionate exaltation of feeling, many sick people ceased to feel the ailment that had tormented them hitherto; they believed themselves healed, and confessed it aloud, praising God and His new saint. The clergy were compelled to place the body in a chapel; the people demanded an opportunity of paying their devotions, and thronged to the place in incredible numbers; the mountaineers, who are naturally inclined to strong religious feeling, came down in crowds from their valleys; the devotion, the miracles, and the adoration increased every day. The Bishop's ordinances for confining and gradually putting down a new worship of this kind, could not be carried out; at every attempt to oppose them the people grew angry, and were ready to assault any and every unbeliever. 'What!' they cried, 'did not the holy saint Carlo Borromeo walk on this earth among our forefathers? Did not his mother live to enjoy the delight of seeing him canonised? Is not the great figure on the rock near Arona an endeavour to make his spiritual greatness visibly present to our senses? Are not his relatives still living among us? And has not God promised to repeat His miracles continually in the midst of a believing people.'

"As the body, after some days, instead of showing any signs of decay grew whiter and looked almost transparent, the people's faith increased, and cures came to

light among the crowd, which even attentive observers could not explain, nor yet pronounce to be frauds. The whole neighbourhood was in agitation, and even those who did not visit the place itself, heard nothing else talked of for a long time.

“In the monastery where my brother was living there was as much talk about these miracles as anywhere else, and the matter was spoken of all the more heedlessly in his presence, because he never paid attention to anything, and no one knew his story. This time, however, he seems to have listened most carefully, and accomplished his flight with so much cunning, that to this day no one knows how he got out of the monastery. We afterwards heard that he crossed the lake with a company of pilgrims, and begged the boatman, who noticed nothing else that was odd or eccentric in his manner, to be extremely careful lest the boat should upset. In the dead of night he reached the chapel where the unhappy woman he had loved so much, was resting from all her sufferings; a few worshippers were still kneeling in the corners, and her old friend was sitting at her head. He went up, greeted her, and asked how her mistress was. ‘You can see,’ she said with some slight embarrassment. He looked askance at the corpse. After some hesitation, he took hold of the hand. Frightened at its coldness, he let it fall again directly, and looking round uneasily, said to the old woman: ‘I can’t stay with her now, I have still a long way to go, but I will be here again at the right time; tell her so when she wakes.’

“He went away thus, and we did not hear of it till much later; search was made for him, but all in vain! How he worked his way across the mountains and valleys is most incomprehensible. At last, after a long time, we found traces of him in Graubünden, but not till too late,

and we lost them very soon. We supposed that he had gone to Germany, but the war had entirely effaced such faint foot-prints as his."

CHAPTER X.

THE Abbé had finished; no one had listened without tears. The Countess did not take her handkerchief from her eyes, and at last rose and left the room with Natalie. The rest were silent; at last the Abbé said: "The question to be considered now, is: shall we let the good Marquis set out without revealing our secret to him? For who can doubt for a moment that Augustin and our Harper are one and the same person? Let us weigh well what is best to be done, for the unhappy man's sake as well as for his family's. My own advice would be to do nothing hastily, but to wait and see what news the doctor brings; we are expecting him back every day now."

This was universally agreed to, and the Abbé went on: "Another question, and one which is perhaps easier to settle, arises at the same time. The Marquis is unspeakably touched by the hospitality which his poor niece met with here, and especially at the hands of our young friend. I had to relate the whole story to him again and again, in all its details, and he expresses his gratitude most eagerly. 'The young man,' he said, 'declined to travel with me before he knew the relation that subsists between us. I am no stranger to him now—I am no longer a man of whose manners and moods he might feel uncertain. I am a connexion of his—if you will, his relation,—and his boy, whom he was so loath to leave behind and who thus became the first obstacle to

his joining me, may now be a beautiful bond of union, and knit us more firmly to one another. Let him increase my obligations by his services on the journey; let him return with me, and be received with joy by my elder brother; and then let me hope that he will not despise his foster-child's inheritance; for according to a secret agreement between our father and his friend, the property destined for our sister has returned to us, and we shall certainly not withhold from our niece's benefactor what he has deserved."

Therèse took Wilhelm's hand, and said: "Here is another beautiful instance of the way in which unselfish kindness bears the best and highest interest. Obey this strange summons, and while doubling the Marquis's debt of gratitude to you, hasten to that lovely country which has attracted both your imagination and your feelings more than once already."

"I resign myself entirely to my friends and their guidance," said Wilhelm. "In this world it is a useless effort to try to gain one's own will. What I long to keep, I am obliged to let go, while undeserved benefits force themselves upon me."

With a pressure of Therèse's hand, Wilhelm drew his own away. "I leave it entirely to you," he said to the Abbé, "to decide for me; if I am not obliged to part from my little Felix, I shall be content to go anywhere, and undertake everything that people think right."

On hearing this declaration, the Abbé produced his plan at once: the Marquis, he said, had better be allowed to start on his journey, but Wilhelm should wait to hear the physician's report, and then, when they had considered what was best to be done, follow with Felix. In the same way he pointed out to the Marquis, that it would be a pity to allow his young friend's arrangements

for the journey to prevent him, in the meantime, from seeing what was interesting in the town. The Marquis accordingly started, but not without repeated and animated assurances of his gratitude, which indeed were fully substantiated by the rich presents of jewels, gems and embroidered stuffs which he left behind.

Wilhelm was now quite ready for his journey, but they were in no slight perplexity at the total absence of news from the doctor. They were afraid some accident might have befallen the poor Harper, just when they had the hope of being able to better his position so materially. The courier was despatched, but had scarcely ridden off, when the same evening the doctor came in, and with him a man of grave, imposing and striking appearance, whom no one knew. The new-comers stood silent for a short time; then the stranger went up to Wilhelm, gave him his hand and said: "Have you quite forgotten your old friend?" It was the Harper's voice, but no trace of his former appearance was left. He had on an ordinary travelling dress, in clean and respectable condition; his beard had vanished, and some art had been bestowed on the arrangement of his hair, but what in fact made him perfectly irrecongnisable was the total absence of any signs of age in his expressive face. Wilhelm was delighted, and embraced him eagerly; he was introduced to the rest of the party, and behaved like any other reasonable man; not aware of course that they had just heard so much about him. "I hope you will have patience," he said, very quietly, "with a man who, old as he may look, is only just entering the world after long sufferings, and is like a little inexperienced child. I owe it entirely to this good man that I am able to appear once more among my fellow-men."

They welcomed him, and then the doctor at once

proposed a walk, in order to turn the conversation to indifferent topics.

As soon as they were alone, he gave the following explanation. "We have succeeded in curing this man by the strangest chance. We had gone on for a long time treating him, both morally and physically, in the way we thought best for his malady, and up to a certain point all went well, but we could not get rid of his fear of death, nor would he sacrifice his beard and his long garment. Still, he took more interest in worldly matters than formerly, and his songs, as well as his way of expressing himself, seemed to be approaching real life more nearly.

"You remember my being summoned from here by a very strange letter from the clergyman? I went, and found our patient completely changed; of his own free will he had given up his beard, had allowed his hair to be cut in the usual style, had asked for an ordinary suit of clothes, and seemed all at once to have become another man. We were curious to ascertain the reason of this transformation, and yet did not dare to enter upon the subject with himself; at last, quite by chance, we discovered the strange reason. A glass containing laudanum was found to be missing from the clergyman's medicine-chest; it was thought necessary to institute the strictest search, and as every one tried to defend himself from suspicion, there were some angry altercations among the different members of the household. At last this man came forward and confessed to its possession; we asked if he had swallowed any of it. He answered that he had not, but went on: 'I owe the return of my reason to the possession of this laudanum. It rests with you to take or leave the little bottle in my hands, but if you take it from me you will see me fall back hopelessly into

my old condition. The feeling that it was desirable to see our sufferings in this world brought to an end by death, was the first thing that put me in the way to recovery. My next thought was to end them by a voluntary death, and with this intention I took the glass; the possibility of being able in one moment to rid myself for ever of my agony, gave me strength to bear it, and so, ever since I have possessed this talisman, the very nearness of death has forced me back into life. Do not be afraid that I shall use it; but rather, as becomes men so well acquainted with the human heart, determine to make me thoroughly dependent on life by allowing me to feel independent of it.' After mature consideration, we resolved not to press him any more on the subject, and now he carries about the strangest antidote to poison in the shape of a well-closed, little cut-glass bottle full of the poison itself."

A full account of the discoveries that had been made during the doctor's absence, was given him, and it was resolved to observe the strictest silence towards Augustin. The Abbé made up his mind never to lose sight of him, but try and lead him forward in the good way on which he had entered.

Meanwhile, Wilhelm was to finish the journey through Germany with the Marquis, and it was agreed upon, that, if it should ever seem possible to excite in Augustin's mind any return of love to his native country, his relations should be told, and Wilhelm should take him back to them.

By this time Wilhelm was quite ready for his journey, and though at first it seemed strange that Augustin should be glad to hear that his friend and benefactor was to leave him again so soon, the Abbé soon discovered the reason of this singular feeling. Augustin could not

conquer his old fear of Felix, and wished to have him away as soon as possible.

Up to the present time guests had been gradually arriving in such numbers, that they could hardly be accommodated in the castle and its out-buildings, a difficulty which in great measure arose from its owners not having anticipated such a multitude of visitors. They breakfasted and dined together, and would have gladly persuaded themselves that they were living in a state of the most delightful harmony, though inwardly, to a certain extent, they almost longed to be away. Therèse had sometimes ridden out with Lothario, but oftener alone, and had made acquaintance with all the landholders, male and female, in the neighbourhood; for it was one of her domestic principles (and perhaps she was not altogether wrong), that people should live on the best of terms with all their neighbours, and exchange perpetual courtesies. There seemed to be no talk whatever of a marriage between her and Lothario; the two sisters had a great deal to say to one another; the Abbé seemed to prefer the society of the Harper, Jarno held a good many conferences with the doctor, Friedrich kept with Wilhelm, and Felix ran about wherever he liked best and felt happiest. The party generally paired off in this way, too, for their walks, and when they were compelled to be together, they speedily sought refuge in music, as that united them by throwing each one back upon himself.

Unexpectedly the large party was increased by the arrival of the Count; he came to fetch his wife, and also, it seemed, to take a solemn farewell of his worldly relations. Jarno ran down to the carriage to meet him, and on being asked what company he should find, answered, in one of those wild fits that always seized him

when he caught sight of the Count: "You'll find nobility from every part of the world—*Marchesi, Marquis, Mylords* and Barons; the only title wanting was a Count's." They went up the steps together, and Wilhelm was the first person who came to meet them in the hall. After looking at him for a moment, the Count addressed him in French: "My lord, I am delighted to renew your acquaintance so unexpectedly; I am surely much mistaken if I have not seen you before at my castle, in the Prince's suite."—"I had the pleasure, your Excellency," said Wilhelm, "of waiting on you in your castle at that time; but you do me too much honour in taking me for an Englishman, and still more, for one of their aristocracy; I am a German and—" "what is more, a first-rate young fellow," interrupted Jarno. The Count looked at Wilhelm with a smile, and was going to make some answer, when the rest of the company came in, and warmly welcomed him. They excused themselves for not being able to give him a good room at once, and promised to get one ready as soon as possible.

"Ah, ah! I see," he said smiling, "we have trusted to chance to be our quartermaster; and in that case a little management and prudence will do wonders. Now I shall beg you not to move even a slipper from its place, for if you do, I see that great confusion will arise; every body will be uncomfortably quartered, and I would not, if possible, have any one put out a single hour for my sake. You can bear witness," he said to Jarno, "and you too Meister," turning to Wilhelm, "how many people I managed to house comfortably when you were with us. Let me have a list of the inhabitants, guests and servants, and tell me where every one is quartered; I will make out such a plan of dislocation, that with the smallest amount of trouble everybody shall be lodged

comfortably, and there shall be room enough over for any guest who may chance to arrive."

Jarno immediately took upon himself the office of aide-de-camp to the Count, obtained all the necessary particulars, and, true to his own character, thought it the best possible fun to mislead the old gentleman now and then. The latter, however, triumphed signally. His arrangements were finished; he had the names of the occupants written over all the doors in his presence, and no one could deny that the desired end had been perfectly attained with the least fuss and fewest changes possible. Jarno too, among other things, had managed that the people who at that time were most interested in each other should be lodged as near one another as possible.

After all this had been settled, the Count said to Jarno: "I wish you would help me to trace out that young man whom you call Meister, and say is a German." Jarno did not answer, for he knew very well that the Count was one of those people who only ask questions, in order to have an opportunity of showing off their own information, and the other went on without waiting for an answer: "You introduced him to me then, and recommended him warmly in the Prince's name. His mother may have been a German, but I'll warrant his father was an Englishman, aye, and a man of rank too. Who can reckon all the English blood that has been flowing in German veins during the last thirty years? I do not wish to press the point any further, you have always so many family secrets; but it is not easy to impose upon me in such matters." He went on relating a good many incidents as having happened to Wilhelm at his castle, but Jarno held his peace, though the Count made a number of mistakes, and more than once confused

Wilhelm with a young Englishman who had been in the Prince's suite. In former times this good gentleman had had a wonderful memory, and he was still proud of being able to remember the minutest incidents of his youth; but now he would insist just as positively on the truth of a number of extraordinary combinations and fables, with which, as his memory grew weaker, his imagination had deluded him. Still, with all this, he had become very kind and courteous, and his presence was a great boon to our party. He recommended them to read something useful together, and even suggested some little games, which he directed himself most carefully, even when he did not play; and when people wondered at this condescension, would answer: that it was the duty of every one who withdrew from the world in great matters, to conform all the more to it on indifferent points.

For Wilhelm these games brought many an anxious and annoying moment, as Friedrich, in his thoughtless fashion, seized constant opportunities to hint at his fondness for Natalie. How could this have come into his head? What right had he to think or say such things? And surely the rest of the party would believe that as he and Wilhelm were so much together, Wilhelm had been imprudent enough to tell him this unfortunate secret.

One day, just as a joke of this kind had occasioned more than the usual merriment, Augustin burst open the door, and rushed in with a fearful expression on his face; he was pale, his eyes looked wild, and he seemed longing to say something which his tongue could not utter. The party was terrified; Lothario and Jarno, suspecting a return of his old madness, rushed upon him and held him fast. At last he found words and began, first with a hollow stammer, and then loudly and vehe-

mently, to call out: "Don't hold me! Run, help! Save the child! Felix is poisoned!"

They let him go, he rushed out, and the whole terrified party after him. They called the doctor, Augustin went before them to the Abbé's room, and there was the child, looking frightened and shy as he heard them calling out to him from a distance: "What have you been doing?"

"Dear father!" he called out, "I did not drink out of the bottle, I drank out of the glass; I was so very thirsty."

Augustin wrung his hands, crying: "He is lost!" pushed through the rest, who were standing round, and hurried away.

A glass of milk of almonds was standing on the table, and near it a decanter more than half empty; the doctor came, listened to all they could tell him, and saw with horror the well-known little laudanum bottle lying empty on the table. He sent for some vinegar, and at once began to use all the remedies his art could suggest.

Natalie had the boy taken into another room; she exerted herself very much for him, and seemed very anxious. The Abbé had rushed off to find Augustin, and try to force some explanation from him. The child's unhappy father had been doing the same, but all in vain, and when he came back could read anxiety and fear in every one's face. In the meantime the doctor had examined the almond-milk, and discovered the very strongest mixture of opium; the child was lying on the sofa, and seemed very ill; he begged his father "not to let them make him swallow any more nasty stuff,—to keep them from teasing him." Lothario, meanwhile, had sent off his servants to look for Augustin, and had followed them himself on horseback. Natalie was sitting by the child; he crept on to her lap for refuge, and

begged her to keep them away, and let him have a little bit of sugar: the vinegar was so sour. The doctor allowed this: he said the child was frightfully agitated, and must be left quiet a little; everything advisable had been done already, and he would continue to do his best. The Count came in, with some repugnance as it seemed; he looked grave—indeed solemn—laid his hands on the child, raised his eyes to heaven, and remained some moments in this attitude. Wilhelm, who had thrown himself on to a chair, and was sitting there perfectly inconsolable, sprang up, gave Natalie a despairing look, and left the room.

Soon after, the Count went away too.

"I cannot understand how it is," said the doctor after a pause, "that the boy does not show the faintest symptoms of danger. If he only took one mouthful, he must have swallowed a tremendous dose of laudanum, and yet there is no more movement in his pulse than might quite be accounted for by my remedies and the fright."

Soon after this, Jarno arrived with the news that Augustin had been found bleeding in the loft: that a razor had lain near him, and probably he had cut his throat. The doctor hastened away, and met the servants carrying him downstairs. He was laid on a bed, and carefully examined; the razor had entered the wind-pipe, and he had fainted from loss of blood, but they soon found that life was not extinct, and they might venture to hope. The doctor placed his body in the right position, sewed up the wound, and put on a bandage. It was a sleepless, anxious night. The child would not let any one take him away from Natalie. Wilhelm sat before her on a low stool, and took the boy's feet on his lap; his head and breast lay on hers, and thus they

shared the pleasant burden and the painful anxiety, and in this uncomfortable, sad position, waited for the day to dawn. Natalie had given Wilhelm her hand; they did not speak, but looked at the child and at each other. Lothario and Jarno sat at the other end of the room, carrying on such an important conversation, that, if the events of our story did not press us so closely, we should willingly give it to our readers. The child slept sweetly, awoke early quite cheerful, jumped up and asked for a piece of bread and butter.

As soon as Augustin had in some measure recovered, they tried to obtain an explanation from him. Not without a great deal of trouble, and then only by degrees, they learned that the Count's unfortunate "dislocation" of their arrangements had placed him in the same room with the Abbé: that he had found there the manuscript containing his own story; this had terrified him beyond measure, and he was now convinced that he ought not to live any longer: he had at once, as usual, taken refuge in the laudanum, had poured it into some milk of almonds and yet had shuddered on raising it to his lips: that he had then left it on the table, in order to go into the garden once more, and look upon the beautiful world: and that on coming back he had found the child just in the act of filling up the glass again after having drunk out of it.

They begged the miserable man to be calm; he seized Wilhelm's hand convulsively, saying: "Why did not I leave you long ago? I knew quite well that I should be the cause of that boy's death, and he of mine." "But the boy is alive!" said Wilhelm. The doctor had been listening attentively, and he now asked Augustin whether the contents of both bottle and glass had been mixed with poison. "No," he answered, "only the glass."

"Then by the most fortunate chance," cried the doctor, "the child drank out of the bottle. A merciful genius has guided his hand, and prevented him from grasping death when it stood within his reach." "No, no!" cried Wilhelm, almost with a shriek, putting his hands before his eyes; "your verdict is fearful. The child said expressly that he had not drunk out of the bottle, but out of the glass. His apparent health is all a delusion; he will die under our hands." He rushed away; the doctor went down to the little fellow, fondled him kindly, and said: "Now tell me, Felix; you did drink out of the bottle, and not out of the glass?" The child began to cry. The doctor then told Natalie quietly how the matter stood, and she tried hard to get the truth out of the boy, but all in vain; he only cried more passionately than ever, and at last sobbed himself to sleep.

Wilhelm sat up with him, and the night passed quietly. The next morning Augustin was found dead in his bed; he had deceived his watchful attendants by pretending to be quite calm, had quietly undone the bandages, and had bled to death. Natalie took the child for a walk; he was in one of his merriest moods. "You are so kind," he said to her; "you never scold or slap me; I won't tell anybody else, but I will tell you; I did drink out of the bottle. Mamma Aurelia used to rap my fingers when I tried to take hold of the decanter; and father looked so angry I thought he was going to beat me."

Natalie's feet seemed winged as she ran back into the house; Wilhelm came to meet her, still full of anxiety. "Happy father!" she called out loudly, lifting up the child and throwing him into his arms; "here is your son! He *did* drink out of the bottle; so his naughtiness has saved his life."

They told the Count how happily the story had ended, but he listened to them with that smiling, quiet, modest assurance with which we are accustomed to tolerate the errors of good people. Jarno, carefully as he was in the habit of noticing everything, was puzzled for once; he could not explain this sublime self-sufficiency. At last however, after many a circumlocution, he was told: the Count was satisfied the child had taken poison, and had been miraculously saved from death by his own prayers, and the laying on of his hands. He had now made up his mind to go away too; his packing seldom occupied more than a few moments, and at parting, the lovely Countess took Wilhelm's hand in hers, before letting her sister's go, joined the four in one firm clasp, then turned away quickly and stepped into her carriage.

Such a number of remarkable and dreadful events crowding one upon another, necessitating an unusual mode of life, and putting everything into disorder and confusion, had brought a kind of feverish excitement into the house. The hours for rising and going to bed, for meals and for social intercourse, had become deranged, and turned upside down. Therèse was the only one who remained in the beaten track; the men tried to restore their good spirits by drinking more wine than usual, and by so doing only gained an artificial state of feeling, which dispelled their natural mood, and with it all true mirth and activity.

Wilhelm was agitated and unsettled by the most passionate feelings; the sudden and frightful events that had occurred, had completely unfitted him to resist the passion that had so completely taken possession of his heart. Felix had been given back to him, and yet he seemed as if he had nothing; Werner's letters and the bills of exchange had come, and everything was ready

for his journey, except the courage to start. And yet everything seemed to force the journey upon him. He found it difficult not to suspect, that Lothario and Therèse were only waiting for his departure in order to be married. Contrary to his usual habits, Jarno was very quiet, and you might almost have said that he had lost some of his ordinary cheerfulness. Fortunately for Wilhelm, the doctor helped him in some measure out of his difficulty, by pronouncing him ill and prescribing some medicine.

The whole party were accustomed to meet in the evening, and that wild fellow Friedrich, who had generally taken more wine than was good for him, used to engross the conversation, making them all laugh at his quotations and droll allusions, but occasionally putting them into a good deal of perplexity by allowing himself to think aloud.

He seemed entirely to disbelieve in his friend's illness, and once, when they were all together, called out: "I say, doctor, what do you call our friend's attack? Won't any one of the three thousand names, with which you dress up your ignorance, fit in here? Instances of similar attacks are certainly not wanting. One such case," he continued in an emphatic tone, "occurs in the Egyptian or Babylonian history."

The company looked at one another and smiled.

"What was the name of the king?" he exclaimed, and then paused a moment. "Well," he went on, "if you won't help me, I'll manage to help myself," and as he said this, he pushed both the folding-doors open, and pointed to the large picture in the hall. "What was the name of that old fellow with the goat's beard and the crown, who is standing at the foot of the bed, looking so lackadaisical about his sick son? and who is the beauty

that is coming in, bringing not only the poison but its antidote as well, in her modest, roguish eyes? And what do you call that bungling fellow of a physician, who has never till this moment seen how matters stood, and who for the first time in his life finds the opportunity of writing a sensible prescription, and giving some physic that goes to the root of the disease, and tastes nice as well as cures?"

In this style he rattled on; the party controlled themselves as well as they could, and hid their embarrassment by pretending to smile. A slight blush stole over Natalie's cheeks. Fortunately she happened to be walking up and down the room with Jarno; as they came near the door she dexterously managed to slip through it, took a few turns in the ante-room, and then retired to her own apartment.

No one spoke. Friedrich began to dance, singing:

"Wonders shall be brought to view!
What is done we can't undo,
What is said we can't unsay.
Break of day,
Will bring wonders to your view."

Therèse had followed Natalie; Friedrich took the doctor up to the large picture, made an absurd speech in praise of medicine, and stole off.

Lothario had been standing perfectly still in the recess of a window, gazing down into the garden. Wilhelm was in a dreadful position, and for some time did not utter a word, even now that he was alone with his friend; he took a hasty glance over his past life, feeling a cold shiver when he arrived at his present circumstances, and then sprang up, exclaiming: "If I am to blame for what is now happening both to you and me, punish me! Add to my other sufferings by taking away your friendship, and leave me to go forth

into the wide world, in which I ought to have disappeared long ago, without one ray of comfort. But if you look upon me as the victim of a cruel and accidental network of circumstances, from which I could not extricate myself, then give me the assurance of your love and your friendship on this journey; for I feel I dare not put it off any longer. A time will come, when I shall be able to tell you what has been going on within me during these days. Perhaps I am being punished now, because I did not confide in you soon enough,—because I hesitated to show myself as I really am; you would have stood my friend, and helped me to get free at the right moment. My eyes are continually being opened to see myself clearly, but always too late—always in vain. How thoroughly I deserved Jarno's lecture! how well I thought I understood it, and how I hoped to use it and live a new life! Could I—ought I to have done so? It is quite useless for human beings to accuse themselves or their fate. We are miserable, and destined to misery, and what does it matter whether we are dragged into perdition by our own fault, by some governing power, or by chance?—by virtue or vice, wisdom or folly? Farewell! I will not stay another moment in a house, where, against my will, I have so terribly violated the laws of hospitality. Your brother's imprudence is unpardonable; it aggravates my misfortune to the last degree—it brings me to desperation."

"But now," said Lothario, taking his hand, "suppose that your marriage to my sister were the secret condition, on which alone Therèse had consented to give me her hand? This is the compensation that that noble girl designs for you; she has vowed that these two couples shall appear at the same altar, on the same day. 'His judgment,' she said, 'chose me, but his heart longs for

Natalie, and my judgment shall come to the help of his heart. We agreed to watch you and Natalie, and we took the Abbé into our confidence, though we had to promise him not to take one step towards bringing about your union, but to let everything take its natural course. This we did; nature has been at work, and our mad brother has done nothing but shake the ripe fruit off the tree. Now that we have met in such a remarkable way, do not let us lead a commonplace life! let us do some work, that is worth doing, together! It is incredible how much a cultivated man may do for his fellow-men, if, without wanting to rule them, he has the gift and desire to be their guardian—if he leads them to do at the right time the very things they have been really wishing to do, and guides them to the aims they really had in view but could not reach because they missed their way. Let us make an agreement about this; it is nothing visionary or extravagant, but an idea that can be, and often is, well carried out into practice by good men, though sometimes without any clear consciousness of what they are doing. My sister Natalie is a bright example of this. The way in which that 'beautiful soul' acts, simply at the bidding of her own nature, will always remain unattainable by others. Yes, indeed, she deserves that title above many; if I dare say so, even above our noble aunt herself. At the time that our good doctor put that manuscript into shape, she stood alone as the noblest character in our circle, but since then Natalie has developed, and the world rejoices at the sight of such a woman."

He would have said more, but Friedrich rushed into the room with a shout. "Don't I deserve a wreath now?" he cried. "Myrtle, laurel, ivy, oak—bind them all together, the freshest you can find! You've a deal of merit

to crown in me. Natalie is yours, and I'm the magician that has raised the treasure."

"He is talking nonsense," said Wilhelm; "I shall go."

"Were you told to say this?" said the young Baron, holding Wilhelm fast.

"I am commissioned by my own power and authority," replied Friedrich, "and by the grace of God too, if that pleases you better. The one made me a wooer, the other appoints me an ambassador; I've been listening at the door—she has told the Abbé everything!"

"You impudent fellow!" said Lothario. "What right had you to listen?"

"What right had she to lock herself in?" replied Friedrich; "I heard every word; Natalie was very much affected. That night when the child seemed so ill, and lay half on her lap, while you were sitting so disconsolate at her feet and sharing the precious burden, she made a vow, that if the child died she would confess her love to you and offer you her hand; now, why should she change her mind because the child is still alive? What people promise in *that* fashion, ought to be kept under any condition. Now we shall have the priest coming, and fancying he has the most marvellous news to tell."

The Abbé came in. Friedrich met him with the words: "We know everything; you had better make short work; your coming is only required for form's sake."

"He has been listening," said Lothario.

"How ill-bred!" exclaimed the Abbé.

"Now then, quick," said Friedrich; "how about the ceremonies and conventionalities; they can easily be counted up on one's fingers. You must travel; the Marquis's invitation is the very thing you want. When you are once beyond the Alps, everything will come right at home, and people will be grateful to you for

having done something out of the common way; it will supply them with amusement gratis, just as if you were to give a fancy ball admission free; all ranks will be able to take part in it."

"You certainly have deserved well of the public for the number of entertainments of that kind that you have given them," said the Abbé; "it seems that I am not to get in a word to-day."

"Well, if everything is not as I say," returned Friedrich, "teach me better. Come along, come along! we must see them and enjoy it."

Lothario embraced his friend, and took him to his sister; she came to meet them with Therèse; no one spoke.

"Come, no lingering!" cried Friedrich; "in two days you can be ready for your journey. I say, friend," he went on, turning to Wilhelm, "when we first made acquaintance, and I asked you for that pretty nosegay, who would have thought that you would ever receive such a lovely flower from my hand?"

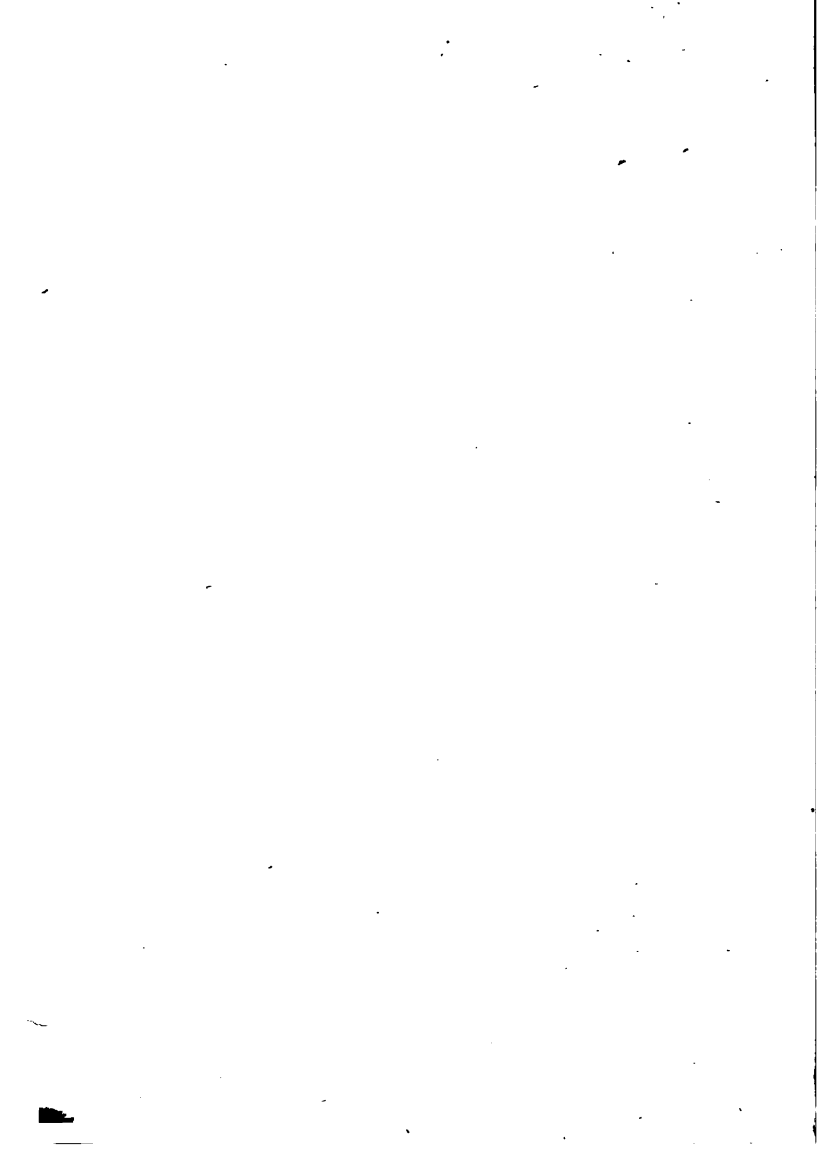
"How can you remind me of those times, in the moment of my greatest happiness?"

"You need not be ashamed of them any more than a man should be ashamed of his pedigree. They were good times, and I never can help laughing when I look at you: you remind me of Saul, the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and found a kingdom."

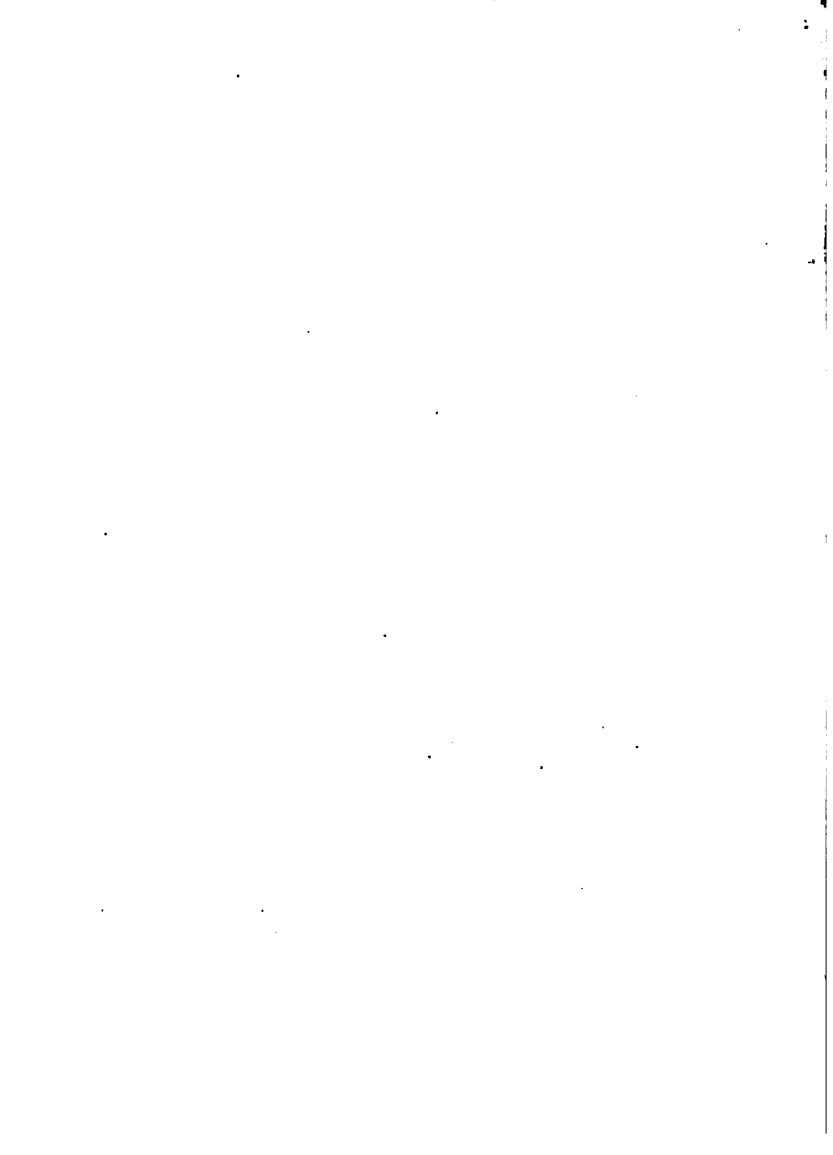
"I do not know the value of a kingdom," replied Wilhelm; "but I do know that I have gained a blessing I do not deserve, and would not exchange for any thing in the world."

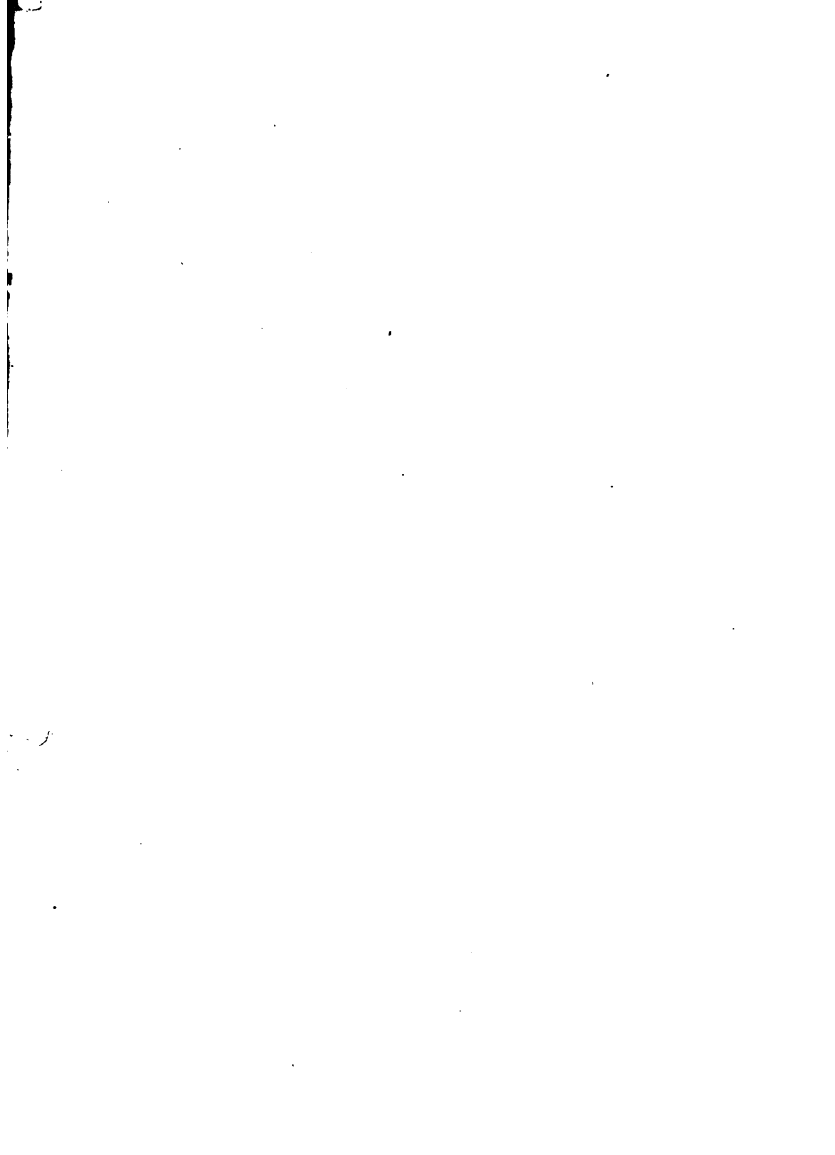
THE END.

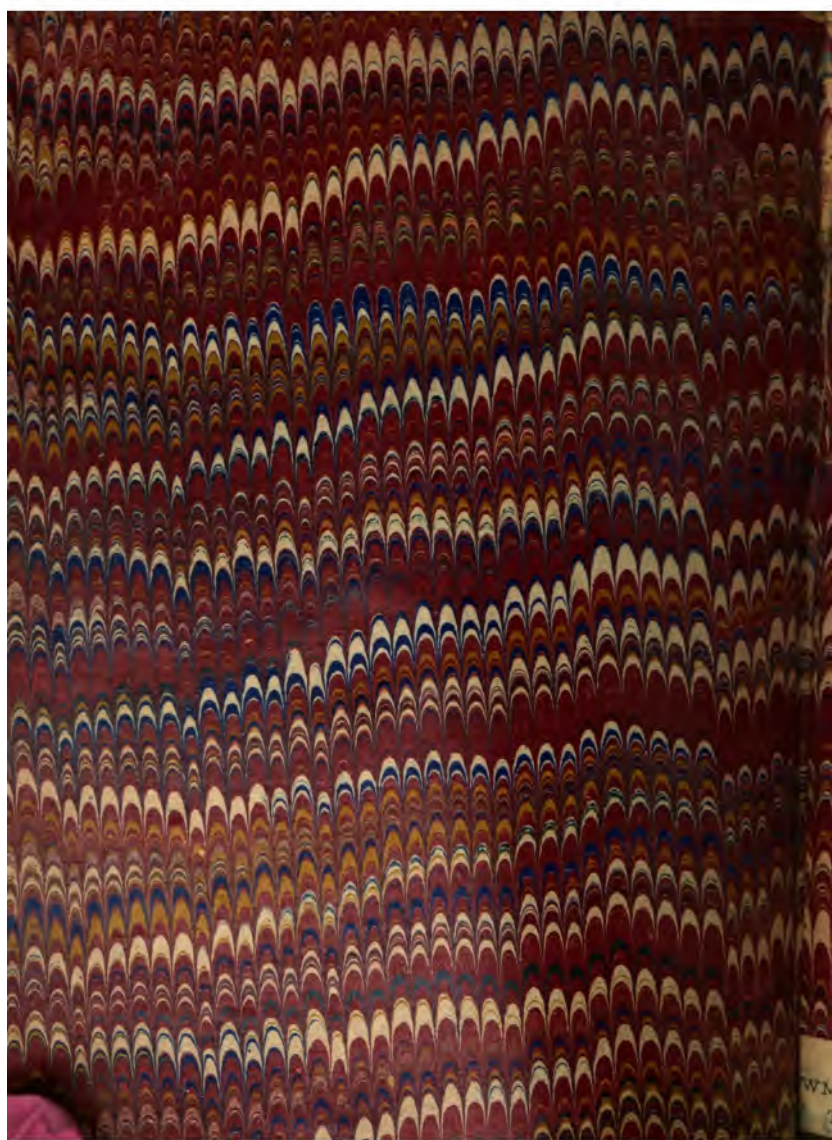
PRINTING OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER.











A FINE IS INCURRED IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW.

4 82938
EXCELLED
DEC 10 1974

DEC 14 '78 H

OUND BY
H. YOUNG,
oy, N. Y.

